

# Testosterone Replacement Treatment for Women



## Patient information

### Tayside Sexual & Reproductive Health Service

This leaflet is for women who are interested in testosterone treatment.

The NICE Menopause Management Guidelines and the British Menopause Society (BMS) support testosterone therapy in postmenopausal women to address low sex drive which has affected them for at least 6 months and causes distress. There is only limited evidence of its benefit in pre- or perimenopausal women.

Before starting the treatment you will be assessed to exclude other causes of low sex drive like relationship problems, mental and other health issues, pain during sex, a history of sexual trauma, side effects of medication, alcohol misuse, lack of sex education, sexual boredom and body image concerns. Testosterone treatment is usually only prescribed once these factors have been excluded or addressed and your symptoms have not resolved by taking estrogen containing hormone replacement therapy (HRT).

Currently, there is no licensed preparation of testosterone for women in the UK so you will be prescribed testosterone gel "off-label". Testosterone is licensed for use in men and you will use the same products at a much lower dose. The long-term effects of testosterone treatment in women is not fully understood but is thought to be safe as long as the testosterone levels are kept within normal (physiological) limits for premenopausal women.

#### **How do I use testosterone gel?**

Apply testosterone gel in the morning thinly to non-hairy, dry and clean skin such as thighs, lower abdomen, forearms or backs of the knees. Vary the site where you apply the gel and do not use more than prescribed for you.

Once you have applied the gel it should be massaged evenly until absorption is complete. You should then cover the area with loose clothing and wash your hands thoroughly.

If you are thinking of taking a shower or bath, do so either before application of the gel or wait for at least two or three hours after the application.

### **For Testogel® 1% testosterone gel sachets**

- Apply a small pea sized amount daily. Your sachet of gel should last for 10 days, unless your menopause specialist recommends otherwise.
- You should reseal the sachet each time you use it, by rolling the top and then applying a paperclip for example.
- **Please note:** the Testogel® pump dispenser uses testosterone in higher concentration and is not suitable for women.

### **For Tostran® 2% testosterone gel in pump dispenser**

- Before you use the Tostran® dosing pump for the first time it must be primed- please refer to the patient information leaflet. Apply **one** metered dose every second day, unless your menopause specialist recommends otherwise. You might want to use a calendar or set up an alert on your mobile to remind you of your treatment. Each pump dispenser bottle should last around 8 months.

### **Will my sex drive improve?**

- If testosterone is the right treatment for you, you should notice an improvement in your symptoms within a few weeks. Although not prescribed for these indications you might also feel an increase of energy and less brain fog by then.
- If the effect is less than expected it may be helpful to see a psychosexual counsellor within our service who can give additional practical and emotional support.

### **What follow up is required?**

- Before or at your initial visit and each follow up (usually at around 6 weeks, 6 and 12 months after starting treatment, and then yearly) you will have a blood test taken for testosterone and sex hormone binding globulin to calculate the free androgen index (FAI). This test should ideally be taken between 9 and 11 AM. Please do not use your gel of the morning of your appointment and avoid applying it on your arms the day before as your blood will be taken from there. The test allows your treatment to be monitored. Your FAI while on treatment should stay within the normal range expected for premenopausal women (< 5%).
- During the reviews at the Menopause Clinic you will discuss if the treatment is helpful for you and whether you should continue. If there is no improvement after 3 to 6 months of treatment, despite achieving higher testosterone levels in your blood, this treatment option might not be working for you.
- If you do not attend your follow up appointments at the Menopause Clinic your GP is unlikely to prescribe further testosterone gel. This is to ensure you are being prescribed your testosterone safely.

### **What are the side effects of testosterone?**

- Increased facial or body hair (in general or on the site of the gel application), acne and greasy skin (uncommon): the dose you are using may be too high, so please check with our clinic.

- Should you experience any loss of hair from your head, deepening of your voice or enlarged clitoris (all rare side effects): stop using the gel immediately and contact the clinic.

## **Tayside Sexual & Reproductive Health Service Clinics**

### **Dundee**

Tayside Sexual & Reproductive Health Service  
South Block, Level 7  
Ninewells Hospital

### **Perth**

Drumhar Health Centre  
South Methven Street  
Perth

**Central telephone line: 01382 42 55 42**

**Website: [www.sexualhealthtayside.org](http://www.sexualhealthtayside.org)**

Developed by Sexual & Reproductive Health Services and reviewed by patients.

Revised: 05/2020    Review: 05/2022    LN0863