How and When Should Testosterone Be Used by Women?

> Although women naturally have much lower testosterone levels than men, testosterone remains an important hormone for female health, vitality, and overall well-being.

When present in healthy physiologic levels, testosterone can support energy, motivation, mental drive, exercise tolerance, muscle strength, libido, sexual responsiveness, mood, confidence, and cognitive function. It also contributes to maintaining lean muscle mass, healthy metabolism, and bone health.

At the same time, testosterone must be used carefully, thoughtfully, and with appropriate medical supervision. The goal of hormone replacement therapy should never be excessively high hormone levels or short-term stimulation, but rather balanced physiologic levels that support long-term health, healthy aging, and quality of life.

WHERE A WOMAN'S TESTOSTERONE COMES FROM

Before menopause, approximately 50% of a woman's testosterone is produced by the ovaries, while the remaining portion is produced by the adrenal glands. After menopause, testosterone production comes primarily from the adrenal glands, although some women continue to produce varying amounts from the ovaries for years afterward. Women differ significantly in how much testosterone their bodies naturally produce after menopause.

Some women naturally maintain relatively healthy testosterone levels after menopause, while others may develop signs of excess testosterone, including acne, increased facial hair, or male-pattern scalp hair thinning. For this reason, testosterone therapy should always be individualized and approached cautiously.

WHEN TESTOSTERONE IS CONSIDERED

> *Unlike estradiol and progesterone — which decline dramatically during menopause and are essential for every woman — testosterone replacement is not always needed immediately.*

Many women feel remarkably improved after achieving healthy balance with estradiol and progesterone alone. Others may eventually benefit from carefully monitored testosterone support later in life, often as they move into their 60s and beyond.

THE RISKS OF EXCESS

Excessively high testosterone levels may initially create temporary feelings of increased energy or libido, but over time can contribute to significant health concerns and unwanted physical changes. Potential risks of excessive testosterone include:

- High blood pressure
- Abnormal cholesterol levels
- Insulin resistance
- Increased visceral (abdominal) fat accumulation
- Acne and oily skin
- Scalp hair thinning or male-pattern balding
- Increased facial or body hair growth
- Mood changes or irritability
- Voice deepening
- Clitoral enlargement
- Possible increased cardiovascular risk

IMPORTANT

Some of these changes may become permanent if testosterone levels remain excessively high for prolonged periods.

THE SAFEST APPROACH

The safest and most beneficial approach is careful, individualized hormone balancing using physiologic dosing, close monitoring, and a long-term focus on health rather than short-term stimulation.

Properly administered hormone therapy should support the body's natural balance, preserve vitality, and help women maintain strength, function, and quality of life as they age.

Have questions about hormone therapy?

Speak with Dr. Selma Rashid and our team about whether hormone replacement therapy is appropriate for you.

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