

Testosterone Hormone Therapy for Women (Introduction)

The hormone testosterone occurs naturally in both men and women. Synthetic bio-identical testosterone is available for prescription use. Testosterone is FDA approved for men but is not FDA-approved for use in women in the US. It is govt. approved for use in women in Australia and a few other western nations.

Licensed medical providers knowledgeable about the benefits, risks, side-effects indications and contraindications of testosterone hormone therapy for women are allowed to prescribe it to patients, referred to as an “off-label” use. A patient is allowed to use an FDA approved drug for an off-label indication when the medical community supports the safety and efficacy of the treatment; and the patient is properly informed about the reasons for using it, the possible risks, side effects, and harm that could occur, and the alternatives. Proper dosing and blood tests are critical. Many clinics overdose women which greatly increases the risks. We use female physiologic range dosing which keeps the risks low.

TESTOSTERONE IS CATEGORY X (CAN CAUSE BIRTH DEFECTS) AND SHOULD NOT BE GIVEN TO PREGNANT WOMEN OR WOMEN WHO MIGHT BECOME PREGNANT.

Possible Benefits of use of Testosterone hormone therapy

- Increased libido (sex drive)
- Increased strength and energy
- Improved sense of well-being
- Improved sleep
- Improvement in joint pains and fibromyalgia
- Improved response to menopausal hormone therapy
- Improved muscle strength and fitness when engaging in resistance training
- Decreased frequency and/or severity of hormonal migraine headaches
- Decrease in mood swings, anxiety and/or irritability

Possible Risks and Side Effects of Testosterone hormone therapy

- Lack of effect (lack of absorption, insufficient dosing, other reasons)
- New or increased acne (reversible*)
- Increased sweating and/or increased bodily odors (reversible*)
- Increase in hair growth on the face (reversible*, rarely permanent)
- Increased LDL and decreased HDL (2-4%)
- Increased Hemoglobin (blood count) - (rare at these low doses)
- Scalp hair loss (uncommon)
- Change in voice (rare)
- Clitoral enlargement (rare)
- Growth of liver tumors (very rare)

*reversible if the testosterone is stopped

There is no documented increased risk of cancer, heart attack or stroke in women who use testosterone.

Alternatives to the use of Testosterone Hormone Therapy

There are also non-hormonal safe and effective FDA approved medications available for improving libido. These include ADDYI and Vyleesi. They are FDA-approved for pre-menopausal women, and used “off-label” for post-menopausal women.

Testosterone is an FDA controlled prescription medicine (Category 3). Testosterone skin cream (1%) for women is not commercially available in the U.S. It can be obtained from compounding pharmacies (we have a list). There is an Australian 1% skin cream called Androfeme-1 that is approved by the Australian Government and can be ordered online (with a US prescription).

Other available forms include male gel prescriptions (Testim or generic 1% gel), oral lozenges (troches), oral tablets and injections. Pellets are not offered at this practice. Male formulations contain a high dose and require careful dosing and close supervision and monitoring.

If you wish to start Testosterone or to learn more about it, please do one of the following:

1. Call the office and book a Telehealth visit with Dr. Jick.
2. Call the office and leave a message with Dr. Jick's assistant, Claudia (626-304-2626).
3. (Established patients): Send a CS-Link portal message to Dr. Bryan Jick.

Testosterone Information Packet

1. For established patients, if you wish to learn more or want to start using Testosterone therapy, Dr. Jick will send you an information packet to review. Due to HIPAA regulations, this packet has to be sent via the secure My CS-Link portal. It will come as a message attachment.
2. The packet has instructions, some handouts and also a special consent form that needs to be reviewed, signed and returned.
3. If you have not done this yet, please set-up a My CS-Link portal account with our group so this packet can be sent to you.
4. To set-up a portal account go to this web page:
 - a. <https://mycslink.cedars-sinai.org/mycslink/accesscheck.asp>
 - b. or do a Google search for "My CS-Link" and click the **Sign-Up Now** button.
 - c. After you see Dr. Jick, you'll receive an access code (usually via e-mail or text) which you need to complete the portal sign-up.
5. Once you have a My CS-Link portal account, install the My CS-Link app on your smartphone and message Dr. Jick. Request the Testosterone information packet.