

Estrogen and Testosterone-Blocker Information

Estrogen and testosterone-blockers are used to reduce testosterone-related features and induce estrogen-related features in order to make you feel more at ease in your body.

It is important that you know what to expect from taking estrogen and testosterone-blockers including physical and emotional changes, side effects and potential risks. The use of estrogen and testosterone-blockers to treat gender dysphoria is not FDA approved. Long term medical effects and safety are not fully known and some potential risks are serious.

Each person responds differently to taking estrogen and testosterone-blockers and the amount of change varies from person to person. Estrogen is available in several forms but most people use oral (pill) or topical (patch) estradiol. Spironolactone pills are the most common testosterone-blocker used.

Estrogen and testosterone-blocker effects

Testosterone-related changes may include:	Expected onset	Expected maximum effect	Effect
Breast growth	3-6 months	2-3 Years	Permanent
Smaller genitals (testes)	3-6 months	2-3 years	Permanent
Fat redistribution and potential weight gain or loss	3-6 months	2-5 years	Reversible
Decreased scalp hair loss (balding)	1-3 months	1-2 years	Reversible
Decreased fertility	Variable	Variable	Possibly Permanent
Decreased muscle mass and strength	3-6 months	1-2 years	Reversible
Fat redistribution; possible weight gain or loss	3-6 months	2-5 years	Reversible
Mood changes	Variable	Variable	Reversible
Changes to sex drive, sexual interests or sexual function*	Variable	Variable	Reversible
Skin changes including softening and decreased oil	1-6 months	unknown	Reversible
Decrease growth of body & facial hair	3-6 months	1-2 years	Reversible

The benefits that hormone therapy can have on your health and quality of life may include:

- increased comfort in your body
- increased success in work, school and relationship
- improved mental health
- decreased discomfort related to gender

Potential Risks	
Increased risk of blood clots, pulmonary embolism (blood clot in the lung), stroke or heart attack Gallstones	Likely increased risk
Changes to cholesterol which may increase risk for pancreatitis, heart attack or stroke Liver inflammation Nausea Headaches Harassment	Possible increased risk
Diabetes Heart and circulation problems (cardiovascular disease) Increased blood pressure Breast cancer Increased prolactin & possibility of benign pituitary tumor If using spironolactone: Increased potassium which can lead to irregular heart beat Changes to kidney function	Possible increased risk if you have additional risk factors

Risks for some of these conditions may be affected by:

- ■ Pre-existing physical or mental health conditions
- ■ Family history of health conditions
- ■ Cigarette smoking or other substance use
- ■ Nutrition, exercise, stress

Alternatives to Estrogen and Testosterone-Blockers:

You can achieve some changes to your body by using cosmetic products. Another way to change your body is to have surgery. You can discuss other options that you would like to try with your clinician. You can choose to stop taking estrogen and testosterone-blockers at any time.

Fertility

Estrogen and testosterone blockers will likely decrease the amount of fluid ejaculated, but it is not effective contraception. If you have sex with a person who can become pregnant, contraceptive modalities are necessary if pregnancy prevention is desired. If you think that you may want to cause a pregnancy in the future, talk to your care provider about your options before you start hormone therapy.

Have any questions or concerns?

UCSB Student Health Services has clinicians that specialize in gender affirming hormone therapy and they would be happy to discuss more details of estrogen and testosterone blocker treatment. An appointment gives you the best opportunity to discuss your health, goals and treatment options. [Join the Line](#) to speak to us via phone and make an appointment. Through [Gateway](#), you can send us a confidential email message to request an appointment or ask for more information.

Call the Student Health LGBTQIA advocate line at 805-893-3368 for any other non-medical questions.