

Gender Affirming Hormone Therapy Information

Hormone therapy is a type of gender-affirming medical care that some transgender, non-binary, and gender-expansive people use to affirm their gender identity and bring about physical and emotional changes.

How is it used?

- Some people take hormones regularly over their lifetime, others may choose to take them short-term or even intermittently.
- The type of delivery method, dose, and timing of hormones is an individual decision and varies based on each person's goals and how their body responds.
- Delivery method and dose may be changed over time, in consultation with a healthcare provider. Taking higher doses of hormones than prescribed does not increase benefits and may increase the risk of serious side effects.

Are hormones necessary for transition?

- Hormones are not necessary to transition. The decision to take gender-affirming medication is an individual choice. For some people, it can be affirming and support their gender identity and expression. Others may opt for other forms of gender affirmation.
- In California, hormone therapy is not required to change a legal gender marker or to pursue gender-affirming surgery.

What does hormone therapy do?

- Hormone therapy essentially initiates a second puberty. Those undergoing hormone therapy can expect physical and emotional changes in line with whichever primary sex hormone is chosen (estrogen or testosterone).
- Initial onset period, timeline and final effects for changes will vary by person.
- It may take at least a month after beginning treatment to notice changes, though some people may experience changes more quickly.
- It can take from 2 to 5 years for all desired physical changes to take place.
- Some effects from hormones are permanent and will remain if the treatment is stopped. Other effects are reversible and will go away if the hormones are not taken.
- In addition to the expected physical changes, some people taking hormones may also notice changes in energy levels, libido (sex drive), sexuality, and emotions. It is a good idea to develop a support plan that may include others who have shared experiences

with transition. The [Resource Center for Sexual and Gender Diversity](#) is a great place to start!

Is hormone therapy safe?

- For most people, hormones can be used safely when taken under the supervision of a healthcare provider.
- Due to family history or individual health concerns, some people may have additional risks to consider.
- Exercising regularly, maintaining a healthy weight, working on stress management, and reducing/eliminating nicotine use are key to lowering risk.
- Health maintenance and screening exams are done based on organs that are present.

Anything else to consider when starting hormones?

- Taking hormones can expand people's sense of their own gender identity, sexual orientation, and attraction.
- For people who experience dysphoria, hormone therapy can decrease dysphoria in some aspects of their lives.
- Hormones are prescription medications that require visits to a healthcare provider and regular blood testing. Visits are typically required every 1-3 months for the first year and then every 6-12 months after that.

What about reproduction and fertility?

- Hormones can stop or suppress gametes (egg or sperm production).
- Hormone therapy is not a reliable form of contraception, it does not prevent a pregnancy.
- Stopping hormone therapy typically restarts gamete production, but fertility after using hormones is not a guarantee.

I'm interested in starting hormone therapy, what's next?

- Set up an appointment to see one of UCSB's Gender Affirming healthcare specialists by calling the appointment desk at 805-893-7731 or through your MyHeath portal under the "Make an appointment" tab, choose Clinic Appointments, then Medical Services and finally, Gender Affirming Care.

Additional resources: [Trans@UCSB](#) and [Resource Center for Sexual and Gender Diversity](#)