

What You Need to Know About Low Testosterone Treatment

What can I expect from treatment for low testosterone (low T)?

The goals of treatment for low T are to improve your sexual health as well as your overall health and well-being. Specifically, treatment should increase your energy level, sexual function, masculine appearance, muscle size and strength, and bone strength.

How will my doctor treat low T?

If you have a condition that can cause low T, such as diabetes or nutritional deficiency, the first step is to treat that condition. If your low T is a side effect from one of the medicines you take, the first step is to discuss alternative treatments that won't cause low T.

Many men need testosterone replacement therapy, which is available in a variety of forms.

What are my options for testosterone replacement therapy?

Testosterone replacement therapy is not the answer for every man with low T. But if your doctor prescribes testosterone replacement, you can choose how you want to take it as long as you're getting the results you want.

- **Skin patches** you replace each day
- **Gels** to apply to your skin each day
- **Underarm solutions** that you apply based on directions for your specific prescription
- **Tablets** you put under your tongue or stick on your gums, two times a day
- **Pellets** that your doctor implants under your skin
- **Injections** you give yourself every 2 weeks

Your doctor will want to see how you're doing within 3 to 6 months after starting therapy. He or she will check your testosterone levels, blood counts, and prostate specific antigen (PSA), and may do a digital rectal exam to check for changes in your prostate gland. You'll have follow-up exams like this once each year.

What are the side effects of testosterone replacement therapy?

- Acne
- Breast enlargement
- Prostate enlargement
- Problems urinating
- Recurrence of prostate or breast cancer
- Sleep apnea
- Swollen feet and ankles

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Men's Sexual and Urinary Health: Low T

Your doctor may also have you come in for blood tests to make sure the numbers of red blood cells you have aren't increasing, which can cause blood clots.

Is there any reason I shouldn't take testosterone replacement therapy?

Before starting testosterone replacement therapy, your doctor will evaluate your risk for prostate cancer by considering your family history for it and by giving you a PSA test if you are older than 40.

If any of the below apply to you, you should not get testosterone replacement therapy:

- You have breast or prostate cancer
- Your doctor felt a lump or hardness in your prostate during a rectal exam
- Your blood PSA level is above 4 ng/mL, or above 3 ng/mL if you're at high risk for prostate cancer
- Your blood test shows you have a high number of red blood cells
- You have sleep apnea and aren't being treated for it
- You have trouble passing urine, which is a sign that you have an enlarged prostate
- You have symptoms of heart disease or have high blood pressure, high cholesterol, or high blood sugar
- You want to father children

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