

# Testosterone gel (Tostran 2%) for low sex drive in menopausal women

Gynaecology Department

Information for Patients

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## Introduction

This leaflet is about testosterone gel (**Tostran 2%**) for menopausal women who have a low sex drive (libido).

Tostran 2% is not licensed for women in the UK. This means it is used 'off label'.

Studies have show that it has benefits. It is also recommended by the British Menopause Society. We have an approval from Therapeutic Advisory Service (TAS) of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR) for Tostran 2%.

## What is testosterone?

Testosterone is one of the sex hormones. In women, it is produced naturally from ovaries and small glands near your kidneys (adrenal glands). It is thought of as a male hormone but testosterone plays an important role in a woman's life including desire for sex. Around 50% of testosterone is produced by the ovaries and 50% by the adrenal glands. In fact, women produce 3 times more testosterone than oestrogen before the menopause.

Levels of testosterone slowly go down as women get older. if you have an operation to remove your ovaries (oophorectomy), there is a sudden loss of testosterone. Women who go through an early menopause (premature ovarian Insufficiency) may also **have** low testosterone levels in their blood.

## What are the possible benefits of testosterone gel?

Low sex drive has many causes. It is not always due to low testosterone.

- Oestrogen (HRT) may help.

**Health information and support is available at [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)  
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit [www.uhleicester.nhs.uk](http://www.uhleicester.nhs.uk) for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals.  
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact [uhl-tr.informationforpatientsmailbox@nhs.net](mailto:uhl-tr.informationforpatientsmailbox@nhs.net)

- Treating vaginal dryness and discomfort, known as Genitourinary Syndrome of Menopause (GSM), may also help.
- Testosterone gel may help some women, mainly if their ovaries have been removed.
- NICE (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence) says testosterone can be used alongside HRT to help improve sex drive in some women.
- It can take 3 to 6 months to feel the full effect.
- We do not yet know if testosterone improves mood, concentration, or energy. More research is needed.

## How is testosterone gel used?

- Tostran 2% testosterone gel comes in a pump.
- Press the pump once to release a small amount of gel (about the size of a pea). Use this amount **every other day**.
- **Do not follow the dose in the packet leaflet, as this is for men.**

## How to apply the gel:

- Apply the gel to clean, dry skin
- Use areas with little hair, such as the inner thighs
- You can also use the lower arm or lower abdomen, but this may cause hair growth
- Change the area each time you use the gel

## After applying:

- Wash your hands straight away
- Let the gel dry before getting dressed
- Do not wash the area for 2 to 3 hours

## Important:

Do not let the treated skin come into contact with other people, especially partners, children, or pregnant women.

## What are the side effects?

Studies have shown that if you follow the instructions carefully, most people can use testosterone gel. Possible side effects are:

- more facial or body hair (hirsutism) - uncommon
- male pattern hair loss (alopecia) which could be patchy or at the front - uncommon
- acne and greasy skin - uncommon
- deepening of voice - rare

- enlarged clitoris - rare

Studies have not shown a higher risk of heart disease or breast cancer, but more research is needed.

## What blood tests will be needed?

- You do not always need a blood test before starting testosterone. Your doctor may check your level as a guide.
- There is no single “normal” testosterone level for women.
- A low level does not always mean you need treatment.
- Treatment is based on your symptoms, not just your blood test result.

## While using testosterone:

- You should have a blood test after 3 months. This checks your testosterone level.
- Your symptoms and any side effects carry on while taking HRT.

If your blood test is showing normal testosterone level and you willing to continue with the treatment then it is recommended to have a blood test at least **once a year**.

The aim is to keep your testosterone level within the normal range for women.

## When should testosterone gel not be used?

- During pregnancy or breastfeeding.
- If you have active liver disease.
- if you have a history of hormone sensitive breast cancer.
- If you are a competitive athlete.
- For women with upper normal limits of testosterone levels.

## Contact details

You can contact the secretary of your menopause specialist at Leicester Royal Infirmary on 0116 258 6441.

