

## **Hormone Therapy in Adult Men**

Thank you for asking us about testosterone replacement therapy! Caring for you is what we do. Recent aggressive media advertising has resulted in a great increase in requests for testosterone replacement therapy among our healthy adult male patients. While some requests are appropriate and based on symptoms that may accurately reflect hypogonadism or “low T,” many have normal symptoms of aging or deconditioning.

Even when appropriately diagnosed and treated, it has been our experience that most patients do not have a dramatic improvement in their symptoms. They often feel bad when the dose wears down so that they interpret this as evidence of a disease instead of withdrawal from a hormone medication.

Increasing concerns about the safety of testosterone therapy have resulted in this being classified as a “Controlled Substance” requiring closer monitoring by the prescribing physician. Some recent studies strongly suggest an increase in cardiac risks and prostate cancer risks with this therapy. Other concerns remain for the relationship between blood clots, cholesterol abnormalities, blood abnormalities, and strokes. From the interpretation of the data, the jury is still out on whether this will be a safe therapy going forward.

**After reviewing the available studies, in an effort to improve safety and reduce the risks for our patients, I am asking my staff to review the following checklist for any patient on testosterone replacement:**

- Two low levels of testosterone documented off therapy
- 2 documented symptoms of hypogonadism
- Annual prostate exam
- Age less than 60
- No prior heart disease
- No tobacco use
- No first-degree family members with prostate cancer
- Duration of therapy less than 10 years
- No uncontrolled hypertension (140/80)
- No suspected or untreated sleep apnea
- HDL at least 40 and LDL no higher than 130
- Normal hemoglobin and hematocrit

**If patients do not meet any of these criteria, cardiology or urology consultation and clearance may be required to renew any testosterone therapies.**

Please do not hesitate to request an appointment to discuss your risk factors and whether continuing therapy is appropriate. Thank you for your patience as we carefully consider the risks and benefits of this treatment.

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