

10 Top Tips on Testosterone use for Women

1. Women produce more testosterone than estrogen, but far less than men do. It is derived in equal amounts from the adrenals and ovarian stroma.
2. Testosterone acts as a central neurosteroid affecting interest in sex.
3. Genital sexual response in women requires the tissues to be oestrogenised though androgens may also have a role.
4. Ovarian removal or ablation by radiotherapy, infarction or infection will result in depletion of testosterone. This may affect sexual function in some women. This can only be assessed once oestrogen has been adequately replaced both vaginally and systemically.
5. A total testosterone level is not very informative as testosterone is significantly protein bound. Measure the sex hormone binding globulin and calculate a Free Androgen Index.
Testosterone x 100

SHBG

6. If a woman complains specifically about loss of sexual interest ask if there are other associated symptoms of androgen deficiency such as lack of motivation or energy, myalgia or mood change (often anxiety)

CHECK

If the free androgen index is in the lower quartile for women,

AND

That she is adequately oestrogenised (preferably with a non-oral estrogen) so there are no flushes

AND

That atrophy has been reversed so sex is comfortable

AND

There are no relationship issues

You can then consider supplementation as suggested by NICE NG23

7. There are no licensed testosterone products for women on the UK market
We suggest Testim® (1% testosterone gel) which comes in 5.0g tubes, each containing 50mgs testosterone, with caps (Testogel® is very similar but is packaged in a sachet).
Women should start with 1/10 of a tube =5mg testosterone massaged into the anterior thigh daily
8. We suggest checking the free androgen index after about 8 weeks and reviewing clinically and biochemically.
9. Patient satisfaction is the primary criterion with the free androgen index somewhere near or just above the female median. This will avoid excess hair or acne though the site of application may have increased hair growth due to higher local concentration.
10. If no better after three months and blood levels have increased, stop.