



# Testosterone Information

Testosterone comes in several formulations including injections, gels and creams. Currently in Australia to access a PBS-subsidised testosterone script, you need an initial script from an endocrinologist, sexual health physician or urologist. Rainbow Care Clinic is able to supply private scripts initially for testosterone and will collaborate with the non-GP specialist for the PBS-subsidised script. Testosterone scripts are only valid for 6 months.

Testosterone can be commenced at full dose or can be slowly increased for a more gradual effect. It is important to understand that bottom (clitoral) growth and lowering/ darkening of the voice may occur even at low levels of testosterone and thus later changes such as development of facial hair and masculine body shape are difficult to achieve without bottom growth or voice breaking. It is very difficult to tailor masculinising hormonal therapy to pick for some features and not others. It is possible to cease hormonal therapy after some permanent changes have occurred. Testosterone use is generally safe if used under medical supervision. You will require regular blood tests and monitoring while you are taking testosterone. Testosterone targets are 10-15 nmol/L typically measured at the lowest point (trough level), that is, just before your next dose of testosterone.

Tasmania: Tasmanian pharmacies can only accept Tasmanian scripts for testosterone.

## Types of Testosterone

Testosterone can be delivered to your body in either injection form or absorbed through the skin (transdermal) via gels or creams applied to the skin (see table below). Injections may be preferred by those wishing to have full masculinisation effects of testosterone, avoid a daily medication and/or reduce risk of transfer of testosterone to partners via skin contact. Transdermal options may be preferred by those wishing to start on a lower dose of testosterone (noting that full doses are still possible with non-injection formulations) and/or do not wish to have injections or attend the clinic for the injections.

## Applying Gels and Creams

Each different testosterone product has different instructions for application which should be followed. Gels and creams should be applied thinly to clean, dry and healthy skin. Creams need to be rubbed in while gels should be allowed to dry on the skin without rubbing them in. Testavan recommends using their applicator rather than your hands and fingers, while the other products do not have an applicator and you should wash your hands thoroughly after application. Product information advises different sites for applications for different products; Testavan = shoulder or upper arms; Androforte = torso; Testogel = shoulder, upper arm or abdomen. You can apply these products to areas not mentioned such as the upper thighs or torso, as these may be preferred to prevent transfer to other people, but be aware the product absorption may not have been tested in these sites so absorption may be variable. Once your skin is dry or the cream rubbed in, wash your hands thoroughly and cover the treated area with clothing. Avoid bathing, showering or swimming after use (2 hours for Testavan 2% gel, 6 hours for Androforte cream and Testogel 1% gel) as this may make it less effective. Thus try to apply it just after a wash.

Testosterone gels and creams can transfer to other people via touch or skin to skin contact so it is important that others (especially women and children) do not touch the area where you have applied the testosterone. The risk of transfer can be reduced by washing your hands thoroughly

after applying the gel or cream and having a shower before situations where skin-to-skin contact is likely. Be sure to keep testosterone packets away from any children and dispose of them safely. If this is a significant concern for you, you may wish to consider injections.

## Testosterone injections

There are two main types of testosterone injections, short acting and long acting. The shorter acting testosterone requires injections to be given every 2-4 weeks. The advantage of these injections is that you can learn how to self administer them which may suit people who have to travel a lot or have difficulties accessing a clinic for their injections. Unfortunately, they have been shortages, it is not listed on the PBS and there is a higher risk of supra-therapeutic, that is, too high levels of testosterone and the side effects of this. Rainbow Care Clinic prefers the more commonly used testosterone injection, Reandron which is a long-acting testosterone. It is given as an intramuscular injection in the buttocks approximately every 10-12 weeks. The interval can vary from person to person. The advantage is less frequent injections however because self-administration is quite difficult you will need a doctor or nurse to inject it for you.

## Types of testosterone available in Australia

Testosterone	Standard full dose	PBS listed*	Pros	Cons
<i>Injections</i>				
Testosterone undecanoate (Reandron)	1 x 1g injection every 10-12 weeks (first 2 doses 6 weeks apart)	Yes	Less frequent dosing	Needs to be administered by nurse or doctor
Testosterone enanthate (Primoteston)	1 x 250mg injection 2-4 weekly	No	Can be self-administered	Private scripts only Risk of excess dosing Frequent shortages
Testosterone esters (Sustanon)	1 x 250mg injection 2-4 weekly	No	Can be self-administered	Private scripts only Risk of excess dosing Frequent shortages
<i>Transdermal (across the skin)</i>				
Testosterone 1% gel (Testogel)	4 x 12.5mg pumps once daily	Yes	Easiest for low dosing	Risk of transfer to others
Testosterone 2% gel (Testavan)	1 x 23mg pump daily	Yes	Lower volume compared with testogel	Risk of transfer to others
Testosterone 5% cream (Androforte)	2ml (100mg) once daily	Not for gender-affirmation	Lower volume compared with testogel	Private scripts only Risk of transfer to others

\* The Pharmaceutical Benefits Schedule (PBS) lists all of the medicines available to be dispensed to patients at a Government-subsidised price; prices listed are regular prices, lower prices apply for PBS medications for those with Health Care Card or pension

## Costs of testosterone

Testosterone	Private cost / unit*	Private cost / 30 days (standard full dose)*	Standard full dose
Injections			
Testosterone undecanoate (Reandron)	\$90.99	\$32.50	1 injection every 12 weeks
Testosterone enanthate (Primoteston)	\$37.99 (3 injections)	\$25.33	1 injection every 2 weeks
Testosterone esters (Sustanon)	\$29.99 (1 injection)	\$58.98	1 injection every 2 weeks
Transdermal (across the skin)			
Testosterone 1% gel (Testogel)	\$73.99 (2x60 dose pump packs)	\$73.99 \$37.00 \$18.50	4 pump per day** 2 pumps per day 1 pumps per day
Testosterone 2% gel (Testavan)	\$79.99 (1 x 56 dose pump pack)	\$79.99	2 pumps daily
Testosterone 5% cream (Androforte)	\$105.99 (1x 50mL tube)	\$63.60	2ml daily

\* Prices are approximate and based on a 2024 Chemist Warehouse online search; prices are subject to change and individual pharmacy pricing

\*\* More cost effective if low dose, listed in grey