

12.1.32.1 TESTOSTERONE REPLACEMENT FOR MEN

In the last several years, our understanding of low testosterone levels in men has advanced. The medical profession has generally believed that, as men age, many of the changes they experience are due to the aging process rather than to hormonal changes such as are seen in women during menopause.

Currently, millions of women take hormones to reduce the negative effects of low oestrogen levels during and after menopause. Only recently, we've begun to recognise a similar syndrome in men and have called it "**ANDROPAUSE**".

A man's testosterone level at 50 may only be 25% of what it was at age 30. Twenty to fifty percent of healthy men between the ages of 50 & 70 have lower than normal levels of testosterone.

HOW DO I KNOW IF I HAVE LOW TESTOSTERONE LEVELS?

Testosterone gives a man his lean muscle mass, muscle tone, libido, and helps burn off excess body fat. The decrease in men's testosterone levels produce aging symptoms such as:

- Decreased muscle mass
- Decreased energy and strength
- Increased body fat
- Decrease in libido
- Decreased strength of orgasm
- Decreased erectile function
- Increased risk of heart disease
- Increased moodiness and "grumpiness"
- Increased depression
- Osteoporosis

WHAT IS TESTOSTERONE?

Testosterone is an anabolic steroid, which means that it not only possesses a unique chemical structure but it also has the capacity to promote the formation of muscle and bone in the body.

Testosterone is produced mainly in the Leydig cells in the male testes, and in smaller amounts by the adrenal gland near the kidneys. In women, where production is about one-tenth the total of males, roughly 50% comes from the ovaries, with the rest coming from the adrenal gland or conversion in the body tissues.

12.1.32.2 TESTOSTERONE REPLACEMENT FOR MEN

Testosterone production increases rapidly at the onset of puberty, but starts to drop as a man approaches 30 years of age. Testosterone travels around the bloodstream in two forms – free or bound. Roughly 2% of total testosterone is made up of free testosterone, which is the most “active” form.

The rest is attached to sex hormone - binding globulin (known as SHBG) and other proteins. In aging men, for example, it's possible for total testosterone to appear normal, while free testosterone is actually low.

HOW CAN LOW TESTOSTERONE BE TREATED?

In research studies, men aged between 65 & 87, all with low levels of free testosterone, were treated with either transdermal testosterone (two 2.5mg patches per day) or fake patches containing no testosterone.

After 12 months, free testosterone levels in the group using the patches rose by 75%, whereas they remained unchanged in the group given the fake patches. Subjects using the testosterone patches also lost fat, with the average body fat percentage dropping from 26.3% to 24.6%.

LOW TESTOSTERONE QUIZ

Dr John Morley, a researcher with the Saint Louis University School of Medicine, has also developed a 10-question self-screening tool that can be used to identify symptoms of low testosterone in men.

This can reliably lead clinicians to the possible diagnosis of low testosterone. If the answers to this quiz indicate that a low testosterone level is a possibility, the next step is to have a blood test to measure the testosterone level. If this test indicates a lower than normal level, a visit to our physician for evaluation and treatment is indicated.

- Do you have a decrease in libido (sex drive)?
- Do you have a lack of energy?
- Do you have a decrease in strength and/or endurance?
- Have you lost height?
- Have you noticed a decreased enjoyment of life?
- Are you sad and/or grumpy?
- Are your erections less strong?
- During sexual intercourse, has it been more difficult to maintain your erection to completion of intercourse?
- Are you falling asleep after dinner?
- Has there been a recent deterioration in your work performance?

If you answered **yes** to any of the above questions you may have low testosterone levels. Fortunately there is something your Doctors can do to help.

12.1.32.3 TESTOSTERONE REPLACEMENT FOR MEN

TESTOSTERONE REPLACEMENT

Men are living longer and we are beginning to understand more about the aging process. As this knowledge becomes more available, men will demand treatment for low testosterone to maintain or improve their relationships and alleviate other symptoms, including osteoporosis, sexual dysfunction and mood disturbances – many of the same problems that occur in aging women.

Your first step is a free blood test at Concept Andropause Clinic.

If you are interested in learning more about low testosterone, contact *Dr Peter Burton* on (08) 9382 2388.