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## Testosterone injection and gel (Nebido, Testogel, Tostran)

Testosterone is given as replacement therapy when natural testosterone levels fall too low.

If you experience frequent or persistent erections as a result of the treatment, please let your doctor know.

If you are using a gel, testosterone can be transferred to other people through close skin contact. This may cause side-effects in the other person. To prevent this from happening, cover the treated area with clothes or take a shower before you have close contact.

### About testosterone

Type of medicine	An androgen (a male sex hormone)
Used for	Androgen deficiency in men; delayed puberty in men
Also called	Nebido®; Sustanon 250®; Testavan®; Testim®; Testogel®; Tostran®
Available as	Injection and gel

Testosterone is produced by the testicles. It is known as an androgen – a male sex hormone. Testosterone is essential for the normal growth and development of the male sex organs and sexual characteristics. Where a man's natural testosterone levels are too low (a condition called male hypogonadism), testosterone is prescribed as replacement therapy. It can be prescribed as a gel which is applied to the skin or as an injection.

## Before taking or using testosterone

Some medicines are not suitable for people with certain conditions, and sometimes a medicine can only be used if extra care is taken. For these reasons, before you start taking/using testosterone it is important that your doctor knows:

- If you have any problems with the way your liver works, or if you have any problems with the way your kidneys work.
- If you have a heart condition or high blood pressure.
- If you have a condition called thrombophilia which affects the way your blood clots, or if you are at higher risk of blood clots for any other reason.
- If you have any of the following conditions: epilepsy, migraine, or diabetes.
- If you have a breathing problem while you are asleep called sleep apnoea.
- If you have cancer.
- If you are taking or using any other medicines. This includes any medicines you are taking which are available to buy without a prescription, as well as herbal and complementary medicines.
- If you have ever had an allergic reaction to a medicine.

## How to take or use testosterone

- Before you start the treatment, read the manufacturer's printed information leaflet from inside the pack. It will give you more information about the specific brand of testosterone you have been prescribed, and it will also provide you with a full list of the side-effects which you could experience.
- Take or use testosterone exactly as your doctor tells you to. Your dose will be on the label of the pack to remind you. The doses given below are intended to be a guide only.

- **If you are having injections:** these are given by your doctor or nurse, usually on a regular basis, so make sure you know when your next treatment is due.
- **If you are using Testavan<sup>®</sup>, Testim<sup>®</sup>, Testogel<sup>®</sup> or Tostran<sup>®</sup> gels:** apply the gel at about the same time each day, to a clean, dry area of your skin. The manufacturer's information leaflet will explain which areas of your skin the gel can be applied to – please read this carefully before you use the gel. Your doctor or pharmacist will explain to you how much gel you should use each time.
- If you miss a dose, read the manufacturer's information leaflet which comes with your treatment for advice on what to do.

## Getting the most from your treatment

- Please try to keep any routine appointments with your doctor. This is so your doctor can check on your progress.
- If you experience frequent or persistent erections, you must let your doctor know about this. Your dose may need to be adjusted or your treatment stopped for a while to avoid any injury.
- If you are using a gel, testosterone can be transferred to other people through close skin contact. This may cause side-effects in the other person. To prevent this from happening, cover the treated area with clothes or take a shower before you have close contact. It is very important that pregnant women avoid contact with any areas of your skin which have been treated with testosterone gel.
- Please be aware that testosterone preparations can interfere with anti-doping testing used in competitive sports.

## Can testosterone cause problems?

Along with their useful effects, most medicines can cause unwanted side-effects although not everyone experiences them. The table below contains the most common ones associated with testosterone. You will find a full list in the manufacturer's information leaflet supplied with your medicine. The unwanted effects often improve as your body adjusts to the new medicine, but speak with your doctor or pharmacist if any of the following continue or become troublesome.

Common testosterone side-effects	What can I do if I experience this?
Headache and other aches and pains	Ask your pharmacist to recommend a suitable painkiller
Mood changes, feeling dizzy	Speak with your doctor if troublesome
Feeling sick (nausea), tummy (abdominal) pain	Stick to simple foods - avoid rich or spicy meals
Skin rash and irritation, acne, swollen hands or feet, increased blood pressure, increased breast size, breast pain, increased body hair, prostate problems, increased weight, baldness	If any become troublesome, let your doctor know
Changes to some blood test results	Your doctor will monitor for these

If you experience any other symptoms which you think may be due to the medicine, please speak with your doctor or pharmacist for further advice.

## How to store testosterone

- Keep all medicines out of the reach and sight of children.
- Store in a cool, dry place, away from direct heat and light.

# Important information about all medicines

Never take more than the prescribed dose. If you suspect that you or someone else might have taken an overdose of this medicine go to the accident and emergency department of your local hospital at once. Take the container with you, even if it is empty.

If you are having an operation or dental treatment tell the person carrying out the treatment which medicines you are taking.

If you buy any medicines check with a pharmacist that they are safe to take with your other medicines.

This medicine is for you. Never give it to other people even if their condition appears to be the same as yours.

Do not keep out-of-date or unwanted medicines. Take them to your local pharmacy which will dispose of them for you.

If you have any questions about this medicine ask your pharmacist.

Report suspected side effects to medicines, vaccines, e-cigarettes, medical device incidents, defective or falsified (fake) products to the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency to ensure safe and effective use.

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## Further reading

- [Manufacturer's PIL, Testogel® 16.2 mg/g, gel in sachet](#); Besins Healthcare (UK) Ltd, The electronic Medicines Compendium. Dated May 2020.
- [Manufacturer's PIL, Tostran® 2% Gel](#); Kyowa Kirin Ltd, The electronic Medicines Compendium. Dated December 2019.
- [Medicines Complete BNF 88th Edition](#); British Medical Association and Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, London.

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