



S I D E E F F E C T S

Possible Side Effects of HRT

When you start taking the hormones that have been prescribed for you, you may notice certain symptoms. This is exceptionally common, and in most cases, nothing to worry about. This guide explains what those symptoms are, and what you should do about them.

Combined Oestrogen and Progesterone HRT

Breast tenderness/sensitive nipples or bloating/fluid retention

- Stop taking the oestrogen component if you have been given your oestrogen and progesterone hormones separately. Stop taking the lozenge or melt if your medication is combined oestrogen and progesterone.
- Wait until these symptoms have disappeared (usually takes between 1-5 days).
- Gradually restart your treatment – the same dose you were prescribed.

These symptoms are nothing to worry about and simply show that your body is getting used to having a tiny bit more hormone in your system. If you experience breast tenderness/sensitive nipples, or bloating/fluid retention again after stopping and restarting your medication, continue to take only half the prescribed dose.

Spotting or unexpected period

As a patient, regular (usually annual) pelvic ultrasound scans and medical assessment are part of your treatment to ensure a healthy womb lining and ovaries. If you experience a bleed, then it is usually nothing to worry about. It means there is a tiny bit too much hormone in your system, but your body will get used to it. If this happens:

- Stop taking the oestrogen component if you have been given your oestrogen and progesterone hormones separately. Stop taking the lozenge or melt if your medication is combined oestrogen and progesterone.
- Wait until these symptoms have disappeared (usually takes between 1-5 days).
- Gradually restart your treatment – the same dose you were prescribed.

If, after restarting your treatment, you experience any further bleeding, stop the hormones until it settles, then take only half the prescribed dose, and contact the clinic so that we can assess you. You should also let us know if you are not up to date with your pelvic ultrasound scans. We usually arrange pelvic scans annually, or more frequently if necessary. This allows us to assess whether further investigations are necessary.

Progesterone-only Treatment

You may notice these symptoms initially when taking your progesterone-only treatment, or in later cycles. This is extremely common and is usually nothing to be concerned about.

Breast tenderness

This is due to the progesterone making your body more sensitive to its own oestrogen. It will stop. If you notice this, stop your treatment until symptoms have settled, this usually takes between one and five days, then restart the progesterone gradually until you are back to your prescribed dose.

Late or early periods

Progesterone can make your period come a little early or late. This will usually settle down so continue with your treatment until your next appointment.

Testosterone Treatment

Side effects are extremely rare with testosterone treatment, especially with the relatively low doses that we prescribe at LHC. Sometimes the body reacts to starting the treatment and the unwanted initial effects will settle down after a week or two. Unusual but possible side effects are facial spots and/or greasy skin, hair loss, or hair growth on arms.

Facial spots/greasy skin

- Stop your treatment until the symptoms have settled.
- Restart the treatment, but less frequently. If, for example, you were using it daily, switch to three times per week. If you were using it three times per week, switch to weekly.

Hair loss/thinning

- Stop using the treatment and contact the clinic.
- Please note that it's common to experience short-term hair loss which is unrelated to the testosterone treatment. This is called telogen effluvium, which is the medical term for excessive shedding.

Hair on arm or leg at site of cream use

- Stop using the cream where you are applying it. Apply instead to a different part of your body such as your outer or inner thigh until your next appointment.
- If your appointment is a few weeks away, then please contact the clinic.
- Don't worry, the dark hairs will fall out and will not come back.

Symptoms you may experience	What to do
Breast tenderness/Sensitive nipples Bloating/Fluid retention Spotting/A bleed	Stop taking oestrogen. If you are on combined therapy, then stop taking all your medication. If you are on separate oestrogen and progesterone, stop taking oestrogen and continue on progesterone only. Wait until your symptoms have settled then restart your medication. If symptoms return continue with your medication but take only half the prescribed dose.
Facial spots/Greasy skin or hair	Stop testosterone &/or DHEA until your symptoms settle, then restart the treatment less frequently.
Hair thinning (rare)	Stop testosterone &/or DHEA and contact the clinic.

DHEA Treatment

This is very safe and has few side effects, especially given the low doses we prescribe at LHC. If you notice facial spots, hair loss (rare) or start to feel wired or agitated, follow the advice below:

Facial spots

Stop DHEA until your skin clears up. If it was mild, try using the treatment less frequently.

Hair loss

Stop DHEA and get in touch with us at the clinic.

Feeling wired/agitated

Stop DHEA for a week. If you feel the symptoms subside, try taking it again, but just three times a week. If you still feel wired or agitated, please contact the clinic.

And finally...

If you need more information then check out the FAQ section of our [website](#), or head to the [Patient Portal](#) where you will find more detailed information about your condition and treatment. And don't forget to refer back to your clinical letter which details your specific treatment regime.