



# Lancashire Gynaecologist

*Eric Mutema*

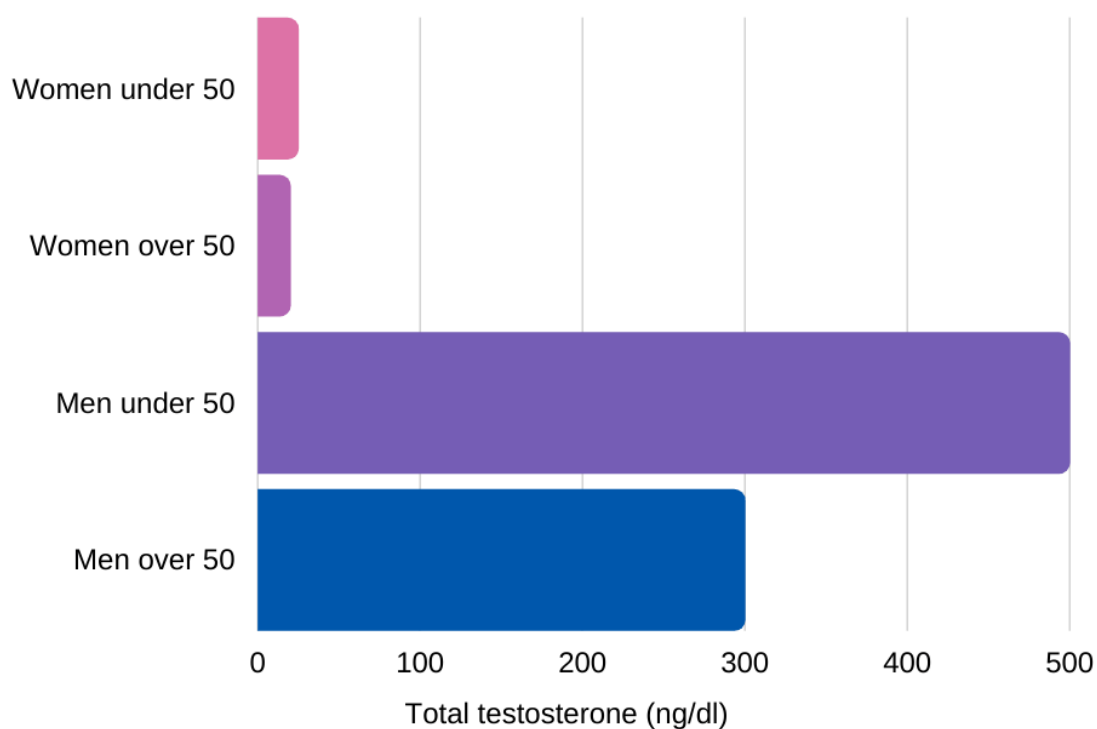
Women, Menopause  
and Testosterone

## Women, Menopause and Testosterone

The hormone testosterone is associated with men, just as oestrogen is with women, but women produce testosterone too in smaller amounts, and when a woman enters menopause, the amount of testosterone she produces reduces, which can have significant consequences for some.

Here we examine those consequences and describe how for some women, testosterone might be as beneficial as a hormone replacement therapy treatment (HRT) if taken alongside their usual HRT.

### Total testosterone levels in women compared to men



### Why women produce testosterone

Testosterone is produced by the adrenal glands and the ovaries in peri and post-menopausal women. It plays an important role in their sexual arousal, sexual response, libido, bone strength, cardiovascular health, cognitive performance, energy levels and wellbeing.

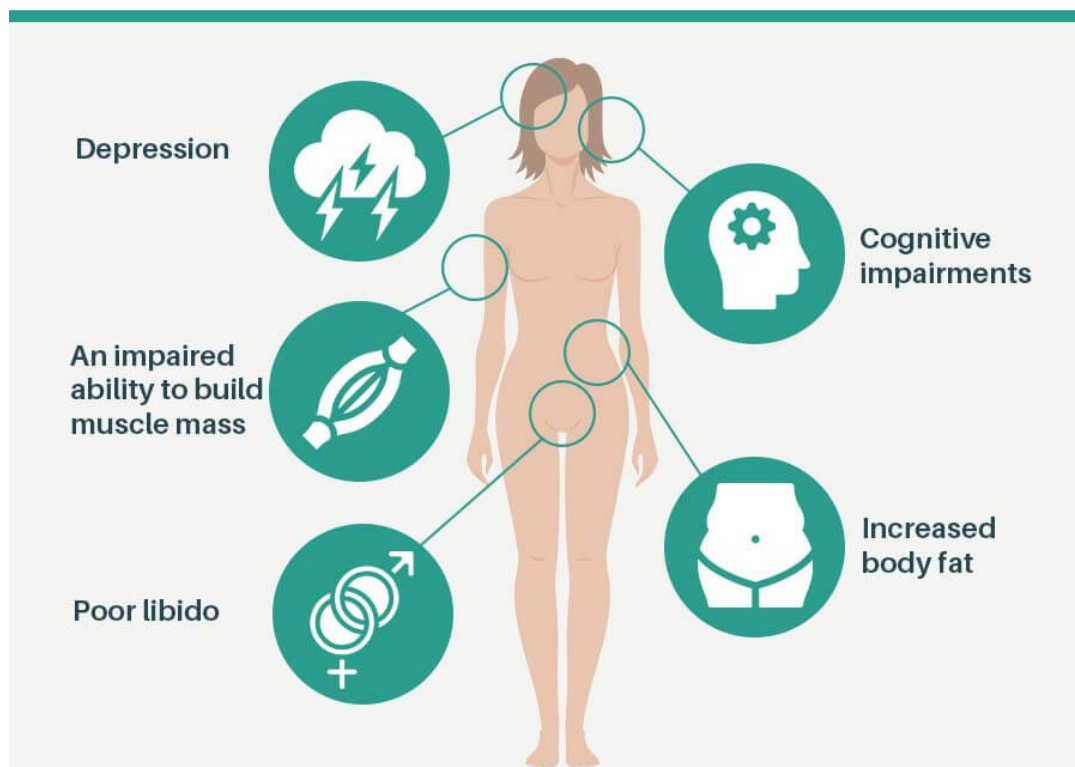
## What happens when testosterone production reduces?

All women experience gradual testosterone reduction as they age. If a woman has had her ovaries removed during hysterectomy surgery, then the reduction will happen very quickly. This is because her ovaries produce the majority of testosterone in her body.

While oestrogen and progesterone decrease significantly at menopause for all women, the reduction in their testosterone levels can be less noticeable for some who might not notice any symptoms as levels fall.

Others though may be more sensitive to the changes and experience a lack of sexual desire, low mood, low energy and impaired focus and poor concentration.

### Symptoms of Low Testosterone in Women



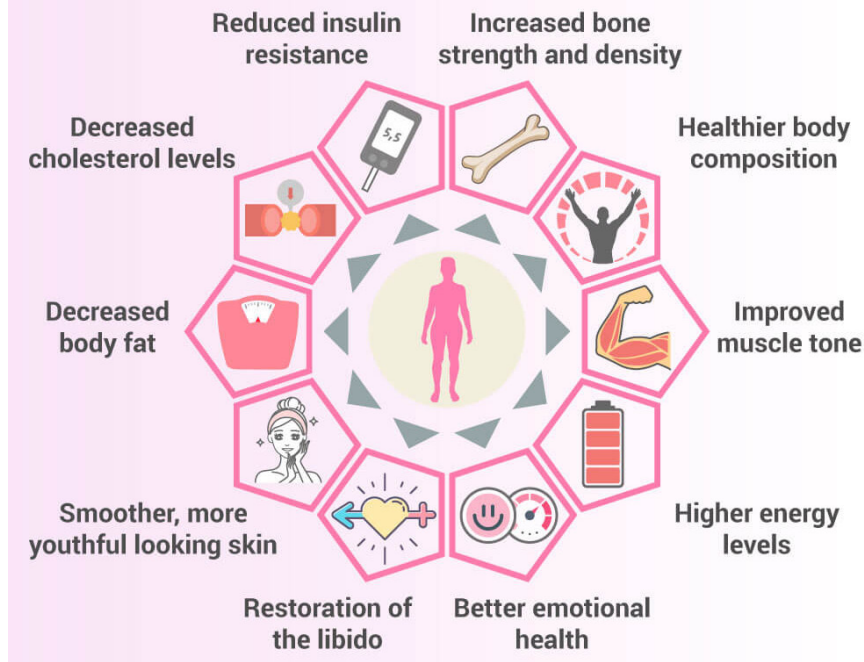
## Testosterone treatment for menopause in the UK

Currently, the use of testosterone is not licenced in the UK but since 2015, guidelines issued by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) have recommended that testosterone supplements be considered for women with low sexual desire if their HRT alone is not effective and other causes have been ruled out.

In April 2023, the UK launched the world's first clinical trials of a new testosterone patch aimed at menopausal women in need of a libido boost that could potentially transform the lives of millions of women.



## THE BENEFITS OF TESTOSTERONE THERAPY FOR WOMEN



### How is testosterone administered to women now?

The NHS does make testosterone available as a gel, 'off licence' to be rubbed into the skin. Available in a small sachet, tube or pump dispenser, just a pea-size amount of this gel is required. The NHS recommends rubbing it into the lower abdomen, thighs or inner forearm. Testosterone may be given to some women as an implant, but in the UK, these are not readily available. A type of testosterone which is not generally available on the NHS but licenced in Australia can be prescribed privately. Called AndroFeme 1, it comes with a measure and is recommended to be used daily. It is only available on special order with a private prescription.

Usually, women will be prescribed HRT alongside testosterone as well as vaginal oestrogen if needed to treat vaginal dryness. It can sometimes take a few months for the full effects of testosterone to work; a 3-6 month trial is often recommended.

### What are the side effects?

There are very few if the recommended dose is used, i.e. a small amount over a week or more.

The advice is to rotate the area of skin where it is applied, and not to use more than suggested.

Higher doses may lead to unwanted effects such as acne and occasional hair growth. There is a lack of long-term data for women using testosterone, but data up to five years shows no adverse effect in healthy women after menopause.

Mr Eric Mutema  
Consultant Obstetrician and Gynaecologist  
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## Talk to the Lancashire Gynaecologist

Although there are plenty of articles available online – and we always recommend any woman concerned about her menopause does her research – it is always advisable to talk to an expert who keeps abreast of current research and has experience in treating menopausal women.

If you feel it's time to see a specialist, please contact Mr Eric Mutema, The Lancashire Gynaecologist. He has wide-ranging gynaecological knowledge and is a leading expert in female reproductive health who treats many women going through menopause.

Mr Mutema offers individual attention, an empathetic, compassionate approach and patient-centred care. This includes a full consultation that will take your overall health into account and subsequent treatments will be tailored to meet the needs of the individual woman. Please don't wait and put off seeking advice if you have the symptoms described above. Get in touch, we are here to help you.



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