

Low Testosterone & Testosterone Treatment

A practical guide for Baytown urology patients

What this guide is for

This guide explains when testosterone treatment may be appropriate, what benefits and risks to consider, what treatment options exist, and why monitoring matters. It is not a promise that testosterone will be prescribed at your first visit or that insurance will cover a specific option.

What is testosterone?

Testosterone is an important male hormone. It affects sex drive, erections, mood, energy, muscle, bone strength, red blood cell production, and sperm production.

Testosterone levels can be lower because of aging, weight gain, diabetes, sleep apnea, certain medications, chronic illness, pituitary problems, prior cancer treatment, or testicle problems.

The goal is not the highest number

The goal is to safely bring low testosterone back into a healthy range and continue treatment only if symptoms improve and labs remain safe.

When is treatment appropriate?

Testosterone treatment is considered when both symptoms and blood work fit low testosterone.

1. Symptoms fit low testosterone

- Low sex drive
- Fewer morning erections
- Erectile dysfunction together with low sex drive
- Fatigue or low motivation
- Depressed mood or irritability
- Loss of muscle, low bone density, or unexplained anemia

2. Blood work confirms low testosterone

We usually need two early-morning testosterone blood tests showing low levels. We do not treat the number alone. Symptoms without truly low testosterone may be caused by sleep problems, stress, depression, weight, diabetes, medications, heart disease, or other hormone issues.

Your first visit is usually evaluation, not automatic treatment

The first step is often reviewing symptoms, medications, health history, fertility goals, and prior labs. Sometimes we repeat blood work before deciding on treatment.

What can testosterone treatment help with?

Possible benefits for the right patient

- Sex drive and sexual interest
- Morning erections in some men
- Low-testosterone symptoms
- Mood in some men
- Mild improvement in muscle and body composition
- Bone strength over time
- Unexplained anemia in selected men

What testosterone usually does not do

- It is not a guaranteed energy booster.
- It is not a weight-loss medication.
- It is not a stand-alone treatment for erectile dysfunction.
- Many men with ED still need ED-specific treatment because erections depend on blood flow, nerves, diabetes, blood pressure, stress, medications, and other factors.

What are the risks?

Side effects and safety issues we monitor

- High red blood cell count, also called polycythemia
- Acne or oily skin
- Swelling or fluid retention
- Breast tenderness or enlargement
- Testicle shrinkage
- Lower sperm production or infertility
- Worsening of untreated sleep apnea
- Higher blood pressure
- PSA rise, which may lead to prostate evaluation
- Possible blood clot or heart rhythm concerns in some higher-risk patients

Because of these risks, testosterone treatment requires regular monitoring. If labs become unsafe, we may need to adjust the dose, pause treatment, or evaluate other causes.

Heart, prostate, and fertility questions

Does testosterone cause prostate cancer?

Current evidence does not show that properly monitored testosterone treatment causes prostate cancer. However, testosterone can raise PSA. If PSA rises more than expected, we may need to evaluate the prostate more closely.

Is testosterone safe for the heart?

A large modern study found that testosterone treatment did not increase the risk of heart attack, stroke, or heart-related death when used in men who truly had low testosterone and were properly monitored. Testosterone is still not risk-free, so we review your heart, blood pressure, blood clot, kidney, and sleep apnea history before treatment.

Fertility warning

Testosterone can lower sperm production. In some men, it can make the sperm count very low or even zero. If you are trying to have children now, or may want children in the future, tell us before starting testosterone. Other options may be safer for fertility.

Monitoring and cost reality

What we may check before treatment

- Two morning testosterone levels
- Blood count / hematocrit
- PSA depending on age and risk
- Sometimes LH, FSH, estradiol, prolactin, or other hormone labs
- Fertility testing if needed

What we monitor after treatment starts

- Testosterone level
- Blood count
- PSA when appropriate
- Blood pressure
- Symptoms and side effects

Insurance and cash-pay costs vary widely

Some plans cover certain testosterone options well. Other plans require prior authorization, cover only older generics, or deny coverage. Many patients pay cash or use discount cards or manufacturer programs. Prices change by pharmacy, dosage, deductible, coupon, and availability.

Testosterone treatment options

There are several ways to take testosterone. They all have the same general goal: to bring low testosterone back into a healthy range. There is no single best option for everyone.

How we choose

- Your symptoms and testosterone levels
- Your red blood cell count and PSA/prostate history
- Heart, blood pressure, blood clot, kidney, and sleep apnea history
- Fertility goals
- Comfort with injections or daily medication
- Insurance coverage and cash price
- How often you can realistically take the medication or come to the office

Baytown clinic note

Some options may not be available in our clinic. For example, we currently do not place testosterone pellets in our Baytown urology clinic, but we include pellets so patients understand the broader range of options.

Option details

Generic injectable testosterone: cypionate or enanthate

How it is used

Usually injected weekly or every 1-2 weeks, depending on the prescription and plan.

Why patients choose it

Often the most affordable and flexible option. No risk of skin transfer to family members.

Things to consider

Requires needles, safe sharps disposal, and good injection technique. Some men feel peaks and dips between doses. It may raise red blood cell count more than some other options.

Baytown / cost note

Often the lowest-cost cash-pay option, especially with generic medication and pharmacy discount pricing.

Weekly auto-injector: Xyosted

How it is used

A once-weekly testosterone enanthate auto-injector placed under the skin.

Why patients choose it

No drawing medication from a vial. The device can feel easier for patients who dislike traditional needles.

Things to consider

Brand-name medication. Insurance coverage varies and it may cost more than generic injectable testosterone.

Baytown / cost note

The manufacturer currently lists a XYOSTED4YOU cash program at \$199/month for eligible patients without coverage or without insurance. Programs and prices can change.

Option details

Testosterone gel

How it is used

Applied to the skin every day, usually to shoulders, upper arms, or abdomen depending on the product.

Why patients choose it

No needles. Daily dosing can provide steady levels and is easy to stop or adjust.

Things to consider

Can transfer to others through skin contact if not careful. Must wash hands, let it dry, cover the area, and avoid contact with children, partners, or pregnant women. Some men do not absorb gels well.

Baytown / cost note

Generic gels may be affordable for some patients with coupons, but cost varies widely.

Patch

How it is used

Applied to the skin daily.

Why patients choose it

No needles and no gel-transfer mess.

Things to consider

Skin irritation is common. It may not stick well. Availability and coverage can be limited.

Baytown / cost note

Less commonly used than injections or gels.

Nasal testosterone gel: Natesto

How it is used

Applied inside the nose, usually multiple times per day.

Why patients choose it

No needles and less concern for skin transfer to family members.

Things to consider

Frequent dosing. Can cause nasal irritation, congestion, runny nose, or nosebleeds. Not ideal for patients with significant nasal or sinus issues.

Baytown / cost note

Coverage and cost vary.

Option details

Oral testosterone capsules

How it is used

Usually taken by mouth twice daily, often with food depending on the product.

Why patients choose it

No needles and no skin-transfer risk.

Things to consider

Can raise blood pressure. May be expensive. Not right for every patient, especially if blood pressure is uncontrolled or cardiovascular risk is high.

Baytown / cost note

Insurance coverage varies widely.

Long-acting office injection: Aveed

How it is used

Given in the office. After the first two doses, it is usually given about every 10 weeks.

Why patients choose it

Infrequent dosing and no weekly self-injection.

Things to consider

Requires office visits and post-injection monitoring. It has a special safety program because of rare but serious lung-oil microembolism and allergic reaction risk.

Baytown / cost note

Access, insurance, and clinic availability vary.

Testosterone pellets

How it is used

Placed under the skin during a minor procedure and slowly release testosterone over several months.

Why patients choose it

Long-lasting. No daily medication, no weekly injection, and no gel-transfer risk.

Things to consider

Requires a procedure. Dose is harder to adjust quickly. Possible bruising, bleeding, infection, discomfort, or pellet extrusion. Out-of-pocket cost can be high.

Baytown / cost note

We currently do not offer testosterone pellet placement in our Baytown urology clinic. We include pellets because they are an available option elsewhere and patients may hear about them from other clinics.

Alternatives and products to avoid

Fertility-preserving alternatives

In some patients, especially younger men or men who want to preserve fertility, we may discuss medications such as clomiphene citrate, hCG, or aromatase inhibitors such as anastrozole in selected cases. These are not the same as testosterone replacement. They try to stimulate your body's own hormone production and still require monitoring.

Be careful with online or gym products

- Testosterone boosters
- SARMs or research chemicals
- Peptides
- Prohormones or legal steroids
- Post-cycle therapy or PCT stacks
- Men's health optimization products from outside clinics

These products are often not FDA-approved and may not be safe. Some contain hidden hormones, steroid-like drugs, or ingredients not clearly listed on the label.

Why we need to know

These products can cause infertility, testicle shrinkage, breast enlargement, liver injury, high blood pressure, blood clots, mood changes, abnormal cholesterol, and confusing testosterone lab results. Bring a picture of the bottle, vial, label, or website to your visit. We are not here to judge you - we need to keep you safe.

Bottom line

Testosterone can help the right patient

Testosterone treatment can be very helpful when symptoms and lab results truly fit low testosterone. It should be used carefully, with the right diagnosis, realistic goals, and regular monitoring.

The three questions we are trying to answer

- Do your symptoms truly fit low testosterone?
- Do your blood tests confirm low testosterone?
- Can we treat it safely based on your health history, fertility goals, and cost/coverage situation?

Selected information sources

- American Urological Association guideline on testosterone deficiency.
- Endocrine Society clinical practice guideline on testosterone therapy in men with hypogonadism.
- FDA 2025 class-wide testosterone labeling update: cardiovascular outcomes, blood pressure warning, and approved-use language.
- TRAVERSE cardiovascular safety trial and related safety information.
- XYOSTED4YOU manufacturer cash program information, accessed June 2026.
- FDA/DailyMed and manufacturer prescribing information for testosterone formulations including Natesto and Aved.

This handout is for education only. It does not replace medical evaluation or individualized medical advice.