

Do Women Need to Worry About Testosterone?

We commonly hear about problems related to low testosterone in men (known as Low T), but surprisingly, this can also be a problem in many women. Since testosterone is usually thought of as a “male” hormone, an imbalance of it is sometimes overlooked in women when they are experiencing symptoms of Low T. What are these symptoms?

- Fatigue
- Low libido
- Depression
- Muscle weakness or muscle loss
- Reproductive problems

Many times low testosterone may be overlooked because of the daily fluctuations in women's hormones, or the symptoms may just be written off as depression. If she is of a certain age, it may be mistaken for menopausal symptoms.

What can you do if you suspect you may have low levels of testosterone? Your Doctor can run a blood test to check this. If you are still having monthly cycles, then you will want to have the test done between 8-20 days after your cycle begins. If you're post menopause, then the test can be done anytime. Testosterone tends to be lower after menopause because the ovaries are the primary producers of testosterone in women and they produce lower

amounts of hormones post menopause.

Women can also have too much testosterone, causing symptoms such as excess facial hair, male pattern baldness and/or fluid retention and even acne. Excess testosterone can happen due to medical problems such as PCOS (polycystic ovarian syndrome), glandular tumors, and/or carrying excess weight. Cigarette smoking and oral contraceptives can also contribute to excess testosterone levels in women.

The amount of testosterone that is generally considered a balanced amount in women, according to the Mayo Medical Labs, is between 8 and 60 nanograms per deciliter of blood plasma, with the higher amounts considered normal for younger women, and lesser amounts normal as we age.

If you suspect you may have too much or too little testosterone, the first thing you want to do is get it tested. If the blood test shows an imbalance, then you will want to do further testing to find the cause(s) of the imbalance. It is better to correct the causes of the imbalance than to just supplement or medicate with the hormone, especially since the imbalance can signify a medical condition you will want to address. Only after returning to health would one want to consider supplementation or hormone replacement... IF it is still needed at that time. ♦