

## **Men's Health**

A man's health is critical to the quality of life they desire. As men get older, their testosterone levels naturally start to decrease on average about two percent each year, especially after age 30. This is normal. However, for some men it can result in fatigue, depression, and or a lower sex drive, ultimately leading to Erectile Dysfunction (ED). This can also contribute to low self-esteem or even be tied to an undiagnosed, and potentially more serious, underlying health condition.

Erectile Dysfunction is the inability to get and keep an erection firm enough for sex.

Symptoms include:

- Trouble getting and erection
- Trouble keeping an erection
- Reduced sexual desire

## **What causes Erectile Dysfunction?**

Male sexual arousal is a complex process that involves the brain, hormones, emotions, nerves, muscles and blood vessels. Problems in any of these areas can result in Erectile dysfunction. In addition, stress and or mental health concerns can cause or worsen erectile dysfunction.

It is not uncommon where a combination of physical and psychological issues causes erectile dysfunction. For example, any anxiety brought on by a minor physical condition may slow your sexual response making it difficult to maintain an erection. This anxiety may cause the erectile dysfunction to get worse over time

There are many factors that can contribute to Low-T or Erectile Dysfunction (ED), not the least of which is other medical conditions such as:

- Heart disease
- Diabetes
- High blood pressure
- Obesity
- Stress
- trauma...etc.

- Alcohol/Tobacco use
- Sleep disorders
- Pelvic or spinal cord injuries
- Prescription Medications

### **What are the symptoms of hypogonadism (low testosterone)?**

Symptoms and signs of testosterone deficiency occur as a result of low testosterone levels or insufficient testosterone action, and hence benefit from testosterone therapy (regardless of whether there is an identified underlying etiology).

Due to the multiple effects of testosterone, the health consequences of hypogonadism are wide-ranging with signs and symptoms affecting sexual, physical, metabolic and psychological domains

### **Cardiometabolic symptoms / signs**

- Obesity (BMI 30 or higher)
- Abdominal (belly) obesity (waist circumference 102 cm or higher)
- Metabolic syndrome
- Insulin resistance, prediabetes or type 2 diabetes

### **Sexual symptoms**

- Infertility
- Decreased sexual desire and activity
- Decreased frequency of sexual thoughts
- Erectile dysfunction
- Delayed ejaculation
- Decreased volume of ejaculate
- Decreased frequency or absent morning or night-time erections

## **Psychological symptoms**

- Irritability
- Sadness
- Depressive symptoms
- Loss of energy
- Reduced motivation
- Poor concentration
- Impaired memory
- Decreased well-being and/or poor self-rated health
- Decreased cognitive function (including impaired concentration, verbal memory, and spatial performance)

## **Physical symptoms**

- Small testes
- Decreased body hair
- Gynecomastia (female breasts)
- Decreased muscle mass and strength
- Reduced physical performance
- Hot flashes or sweats
- Sleep disturbances
- Fatigue
- Reduced bone mineral density, osteoporosis, low trauma fractures

## **What are my treatment options/ when can I start?**

In all types of male hypogonadism – regardless of underlying cause – testosterone replacement therapy is the primary form of treatment. Testosterone therapy is characterized by a wide margin of safety and good tolerability. Treatment can be

initiated when a diagnosis of hypogonadism has been confirmed and contraindications are ruled out.

### **What is the aim of testosterone replacement therapy (TRT)?**

The aim of testosterone therapy – also known as testosterone treatment – is to restore testosterone levels to what is optimal for each individual patient. Resolution of symptoms is a critical indicator of testosterone treatment efficacy. The key with testosterone treatment is to achieve therapeutic testosterone levels; in other words, a high enough increase in testosterone levels from baseline. Symptom resolution occurs at various times depending on the type of symptom and the organ system involved.

### **When to see a provider**

A family provider is a good place to start when you have erectile problems. See your provider if:

- You have concerns about your erections or you're experiencing other sexual problems such as premature or delayed ejaculation
- You have diabetes, heart disease or another known health condition that might be linked to erectile dysfunction
- You have other symptoms along with erectile dysfunction

At Vanderbilt Wellness, we customize our treatments to each individual patient based on their needs and personal situation. We use an evidence-based medicine approach to help our patients get back to doing the things that they love to do.

If you are concerned you are or may be suffering from any of the symptoms outlined above, please call us today at **336-817-9268** to schedule an appointment. We look forward to helping you!