

This is a record of the informed consent process for the Patient. Name:.....
Date of Birth:...../...../..... RiO:.....

Information about treatment with Gonadotrophin Releasing Hormone Analogue (GnRH Analogue) also known as 'Blockers' for Adults Seeking Masculinisation

(For the purpose of making a declaration of consent to treatment)

What are blockers?

Many trans people will benefit from taking medication (GnRH Analogue) to suppress the function of their ovaries. It rapidly suppresses oestrogen levels, periods and egg production. The treatment can be stopped if the ovaries are removed or when treatment requirements change.

This treatment is typically a GnRH Analogue, which is usually taken by injection every 12-16 weeks. There are oral preparations (tablets) such as spironolactone, finasteride and cyproterone acetate that are no longer recommended to be used as an oestrogen blocker in the long term.

How is GnRH Analogue (blocker) taken?

GnRH Analogue is either given as an injection into the fat under the skin on your abdomen or into a large muscle.

What are the possible side effects if I take a GnRH Analogue (blocker)?

GnRH Analogues are usually well tolerated and not associated with significant side effects.

You may experience:

- Injection site reactions (redness, swelling)
- Headaches, dizziness or nausea (sickness)
- Mood changes
- Lower energy levels
- Loss of libido (interest in sex)
- Joint or muscle pain

You will only be prescribed a GnRH Analogue as part of your treatment with testosterone. If the levels of testosterone in your blood are not maintained at a high enough level you may experience some side effects of not having enough sex hormones in your blood.

This includes:

- Osteoporosis. A reduction in the density (strength and thickness) of your bones.
- Hot flushes
- Excessive sweating (especially at night)

You may sometimes have some of these symptoms at the beginning of your treatment with a GnRH Analogue but they should settle down after the first few weeks.

The side-effects described in the data sheets of GnRH-Analogues largely relate to the experiences of people taking these drugs without add-back sex hormones.

What GnRH Analogue (blocker) does to your body

GnRH Analogue works in your body to reduce the amount of oestrogen that your body makes by stopping signals from your pituitary gland from reaching your ovaries. This stops your ovaries from making oestrogen or releasing eggs, and also stops your periods (menstruation) from happening.

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How permanent are the effects of GnRH Analogue (Blocker)?

The effects of the GnRH Analogue are present for either 4-5 weeks or 12-16 weeks, depending on which injection you have. If you do not renew your blocker injection after the correct time period has elapsed, you will no longer have the effects of the blocker.

If you were started on blockers as a young person to prevent progression of puberty in your birth sex, they will have slowed or changed the development of your secondary sexual characteristics. They may also have made your bones less dense and at risk of breaking (osteoporosis). This is less significant if you are taking hormones.

It is important to recognise that for some people their current gender identity is not permanent. It may be that your gender identity changes in the future and you might not be happy with the effects on your body caused by taking GnRH Analogue (blockers).

The effect of GnRH Analogue (blocker) on fertility

Taking a GnRH Analogue will be very likely to impair your fertility while the effects of the blocker are active. When you stop taking the blocker you should return to your original level of fertility. However, if you are also taking masculinising hormones this will impair your fertility whether or not you are taking a blocker.

Although it clearly limits fertility, a blocker is not a proven contraceptive and therefore you should follow relevant contraceptive advice and practice safer sex. Were you to become pregnant whilst taking testosterone the foetus might be seriously affected by exposure to testosterone, with serious long-term health problems (teratogenic effects of testosterone).

The reversible effects of GnRH Analogue (blocker) on the body

Most of the effects of a GnRH Analogue are reversible if you stop taking it. If you are also taking masculinising hormones they may be less effective if you stop taking the GnRH Analogue.

Prevention of Risk and Medical Complications

It is very important to continue to take masculinising hormones as prescribed alongside your GnRH Analogue, otherwise you will not have enough hormone in your body and this can lead to serious health problems and unpleasant side effects.

Statements

Name:..... Date of Birth...../...../.....

I confirm that I have had the treatment fully explained to me and have had the opportunity to ask questions. My attention has been drawn to the potential side effects, and I understand that if I experience any of these side effects I must seek advice.

I have agreed that I will only take hormone treatment as prescribed by or recommended by the Northern Region Gender Dysphoria Service, and that I will avoid using any other hormone treatments.

I know that for some people their gender identity may change over time. It may be that my gender identity changes in the future and I am not satisfied with the effects on my body caused by GnRH Analogue. I understand that it is impossible for me, or anyone else, to predict the future wishes of others with total accuracy. I am willing to consent to taking GnRH Analogue under these circumstances.

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I understand that I can withdraw from this treatment at any time. I will inform my GP and gender clinic if I do so.

Signed..... Date:.....

For staff to complete

I am satisfied that understands the nature of the proposed treatment and has a full appreciation of the consequences of both the treatment in terms of benefits and possible side-effects and also the possible consequences of not undergoing this treatment. I believe that this person has the capacity to make this decision and they were able to communicate their decision to me today.

Signed..... Date:.....

Print Name..... Role.....