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Respect Your Body! A Transman's Guide to Health & Wellness

Transmen's bodies come in different colors, shapes and sizes. Our bodies need and deserve attentive daily care. However, good health care can be hard to get due to discrimination, lack of medical providers who understand our needs, and lack of health insurance coverage. To keep our bodies healthy and whole, we must become informed consumers, educating our health care providers and ourselves.

HORMONE THERAPY - involves taking testosterone to increase facial and body hair growth, muscle mass, deepening of voice, and other physical changes. Taking testosterone is not risk-free. Use "T" carefully with regular medical supervision and blood test monitoring. If you are taking testosterone or considering it, keep these points in mind:

- Everybody reacts differently to testosterone. Age, family and personal health risk factors, organ systems present and other medications will affect how your body responds. Taking testosterone will also influence how general medical conditions are managed.
- Taking more testosterone than prescribed will not speed up the changes you desire, but will likely reduce them, and also increase potentially serious side effects. Testosterone may cause acne, balding, increased fat around abdomen, cancers of liver and reproductive organs, high blood pressure, increases in red blood cell levels, high cholesterol, liver problems, infertility or high levels of calcium in the blood.
- It is possible to get pregnant while on testosterone, although infertility occurs after continued use. Taking testosterone before or during pregnancy may cause birth defects. Consider using contraception to reduce the risk of pregnancy. If you want to be a biological parent, consider freezing your eggs before starting testosterone.
- All body parts need care! Make sure to get yearly pelvic and breast/chest exams if you still have those parts. It's important to remember that chest (top) surgery does not remove 100% of breast tissue, so a cancer risk still exists, and a monthly breast/chest self-exam (SBE) is recommended.
- Street hormones can be of questionable quality and are potentially dangerous. There are also testosterone-imitating products available without prescription. Whatever you use, get medically monitored to make sure you're not harming your body.
- If you inject testosterone never share syringes/needles with anyone. Discard used syringes safely. If you cannot afford new syringes/needles, contact a local needle exchange program.

SEX REASSIGNMENT SURGERY - If you want Sex Reassignment Surgery (SRS), follow the Standards of Care of the Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association (HBIGDA). Although imperfect, these guidelines still offer the best protection for patients and surgeons. Always follow your surgeon's instructions for healing after surgery.

SEXUAL HEALTH - Protect yourself from infections gotten through contact with blood, semen and other sexual body fluids. Use condoms, dental dams and/or other latex barriers with sex partners. Take care of your prosthesis and/or sex toys—use condoms and clean them properly. If you engage in unsafe sex, be sure to get tested for Sexually Transmitted Infections like HIV/AIDS.

MENTAL HEALTH - Living in an intolerant world can cause stress, anxiety and depression. A mental health professional can really help you deal with things. Take care of your body and your mind.

HELPFUL WEBSITES : www.gender.org • www.ftmi.org • www.ifge.org • www.transhealth.org • www.trans-health.org • www.lgbthealth.net

Respect Your Body and It Will Respect You Back – You Deserve It!



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