

# TRANS?



## Male To Female

### Internet Resources

Lots of info and a wide range of views. We don't agree with everything that's listed, but check them out and decide for yourself.

**FAQ: Hormone Therapy**  
[www.altsex.org/transgender](http://www.altsex.org/transgender)

**Harry Benjamin's "Standards of Care for Gender Identity Disorders":**  
<http://symposition.com/jfi>

**International Foundation for Gender Education:**  
[www.ifge.org](http://www.ifge.org)

**Sex Reassignment Surgeons**  
[www.GRSMontreal.com](http://www.GRSMontreal.com)

**Transgender Forum:**  
[www.transgender.org](http://www.transgender.org)

**Trans-Health.com:**  
[www.trans-health.com](http://www.trans-health.com)

**The Transsexual Menace:**  
[www.themenace.net](http://www.themenace.net)

**Transsexual Women's Resources:**  
[www.annelawrence.com](http://www.annelawrence.com)

**TS Road Map:**  
[www.tsroadmap.com](http://www.tsroadmap.com)

### Toronto Resources

**Trans Programming at The 519**  
[www.the519.org](http://www.the519.org) 416-392-6878  
Meal Trans xt. 104; Trans Youth xt. 331;  
GLBT Seniors xt. 118; Trans Sex Worker  
Outreach xt. 305; Trans Communities  
Shelter Access Project xt. 332

**Half-Cocked - Tranny Punk Night:**  
[www.buddiesinbadtimestheatre.com](http://www.buddiesinbadtimestheatre.com)  
416-976-8555

**Health Centre at 410, St Michael's Hospital:** [www.smh.toronto.on.ca](http://www.smh.toronto.on.ca)  
416-867-3728

**Lesbian Gay Bi Youth Line:**  
[www.youthline.ca](http://www.youthline.ca)  
1-800-268-9688 (Ontario)

**Pride & Prejudice, Central Toronto Youth Services:**  
[www.prideandprejudiceclays.org](http://www.prideandprejudiceclays.org)  
416-524-2100

**Ctr. for Addiction & Mental Health:**  
1. **Rainbow Services (addictions)**  
[www.camh.net](http://www.camh.net) 416-535-8501

**Sherbourne Health Centre**  
[www.sherbourne.on.ca](http://www.sherbourne.on.ca) 416-324-4180

**Supporting Our Youth (SOY):**  
[www.soytoronto.org](http://www.soytoronto.org) 416-924-2100

**2-Spirited People of the 1<sup>st</sup> Nations:**  
[www.2spirits.com](http://www.2spirits.com) 416-944-9300

### Good Health Care

You may be offered hormones without seeing a doctor but there are real risks in using **street hormones**. They may not be of the highest quality or the dose may be too low or too high for your body. If you are using hormones to transition, it is important to see a doctor regularly to check for unwanted effects that may be bad for your health.

Try to find a doctor or clinic with some experience with trans clients and expect to spend time building a trusting relationship with your care provider(s).

Your doctor should try to get to know you better by asking about your personal and medical history, your feelings about your trans identity and your questions about starting hormones.

Your doctor should also give you a thorough check-up and order lab tests to learn more about your general health. This information tells you and your doctor about any existing health concerns and helps to determine the dose of hormones that will be safest for you.

Some of the effects of hormones are permanent, and some are mood-altering. That's why many doctors will suggest seeing a counsellor or therapist for support, but will leave the decision to you. Others doctors may require a psychiatric assessment before prescribing hormones.

## Considering Hormones?

## What to Expect

Created by The Trans Working Group of Toronto (Central Toronto Youth Services; 519 Church Street Community Centre; Sherbourne Health Centre & members of the trans community)

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**SHERBOURNE**  
*Health Centre*

## What is Trans?

Sexual orientation and gender identity are important, but different, parts of our self-identity (how we see ourselves and how others see us). Many people confuse the two.

**Sexual orientation** is the term used to describe whether the people we are attracted to are primarily of the same or of a different gender. **Heterosexual** (*straight*), **lesbian**, **gay**, and **bisexual** are terms you've probably already heard. **Transensual** means being attracted to transpeople.

**Gender Identity** refers to how we view ourselves: as male or female, masculine or feminine. For many of us, our gender identity matches our physical body. For some of us, however, the way we see ourselves as male or female is different from our physical body.

**Trans** is a common term used to describe people who express a gender identity that is different from their bodies. You might have heard the terms transgender, transsexual, FTM (female-to-male) MTF (male-to-female) 2-spirit, intersex, gender-queer, or bi-gender. All of these can refer to trans identities.

## Making Decisions

Transpeople express their gender in many different ways.

Some choose to express themselves as **neither male nor female**, or as **both male and female**. Some choose to express their gender by **dressing or looking** a particular way, but prefer not to take hormones. Some choose taking **hormones (testosterone or estrogen)** at low or high doses to help change their bodies. And some choose to modify their bodies by having **surgical procedures**.

Understanding how you feel about your gender identity and making decisions about how you want to be in the world is a process. It can happen at any time during your life and there is no limit on the time needed to make a decision about what's right for you.

Take the time to explore your feelings about your gender. Try sharing your feelings with another transperson, a trusted family member or friend, a counsellor or therapist, or a doctor or nurse who can provide you with useful information.

No matter what anyone else may say, only you can decide how you want to express your gender identity.

## What Are Hormones?

Hormones occur naturally in our bodies. Testosterone and estrogen are two that help regulate male or female characteristics (like body hair and breasts). For transpeople, taking additional hormones can help bring the body you were born with more in line with your gender identity (transition).

Many male-to-female transpeople choose to take **feminizing** hormones, such as Estrogen and sometimes Progesterone. They may also take Testosterone-blocking drugs called anti-androgens. While many of the effects are welcome and help to create female characteristics, others may be hard to live with, and some can even pose health risks.

Before you start taking hormones, learn all you can about the changes to expect and about possible health risks. That way you can make an informed choice. You should know that some effects are **reversible** and will go away if you stop using the drugs. Other effects **are permanent** even if you stop using the hormones.

There is still little research about the long-term health risks for transpeople taking hormones. The largest clinics serving the trans community report few serious health problems. However, this assumes good health care.

## Common Effects

Each person reacts differently to hormones. Firstly, each person is different. Secondly, each "cocktail" has a different effect.

- Breast development may take several years
- Voice does NOT change
- Facial and body hair reduced
- Clearer complexion
- Sex drive may change
- Loss of spontaneous erections
- Loss of upper body strength
- Changed weight distribution and often weight gain
- Fertility declines (lower sperm count may be permanent)
- Feelings change - calmer and steadier, or (rarely) more anxious, irritable, moody

## Possible Serious Side Effects

- Depression
- Blood clots
- At risk for stroke and heart problems
- High blood pressure
- Liver and gall bladder problems
- Prolonged use may be associated with elevated risk of some cancers and tumours