What Is Andropause?

Essentially, andropause is the male equivalent of menopause in women. It refers to an age-related decline in male hormone levels and is sometimes referred to as testosterone deficiency or androgen deficiency. The decrease in hormones and onset of symptoms in men, however, is slower and more subtle than it is in women.

Testosterone is the primary male hormone; it gives men deep voices, muscle mass, and male facial and body hair patterns. As men get older, the level of testosterone gradually lessens — about 1% per year from age 30 onward. While this is normal, you may start experiencing physical and psychological symptoms from low testosterone levels beginning in your 50s.

Andropause Symptoms

Like menopause, andropause can have a variety of symptoms, and not all men will experience the same problems. While some men may not experience any andropause symptoms, others may experience:

- Low sex drive
- Lack of energy
- Increased body fat
- Sadness or depression
- Erectile dysfunction
- Irritability and mood swings
- Loss of body hair
- Trouble concentrating
- Lack of motivation, decrease in self-confidence
- Sleep disturbances — insomnia or increased sleepiness
- Hot flashes. (Yes, men can get these too!)
- Loss of strength or muscle mass

Low hormone levels may raise your risk for other health conditions such as osteoporosis (brittle bones) or heart disease.

Causes of Andropause Symptoms

Andropause is not a disease but is a natural process your body is going through.

A major cause of andropause is the decrease in testosterone production, but other hormones can be involved. Dehydroepiandrosterone (DHEA) is a steroid hormone that your body makes and turns into sex hormones, including testosterone. Your DHEA levels decline naturally too, starting at about age 30. Also, as you age, your level of sex hormone-binding globulin (SHBG) begins to increase. SHBG deactivates some of the testosterone circulating in your blood, lowering your level of usable — bioavailable — testosterone.

Men who suffer from andropause symptoms typically have less bioavailable testosterone in their blood. This means there may not be enough to adequately supply the cells and tissues throughout the body that use it.

Diagnosis

If you have symptoms that suggest andropause, discuss them with your doctor. There is a blood test that measures the level of bioavailable testosterone in your blood.

Some of the symptoms of andropause can also be caused by other factors, including medication side effects, thyroid problems, depression, diabetes, high blood pressure, and excessive alcohol use. Your doctor may want to check some of these possibilities too. There also are underlying conditions such as obstructive sleep apnea that can affect testosterone levels. If these conditions are identified and treated, your testosterone can return to a normal level on its own.

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Andropause Treatment
Testosterone levels vary greatly among men. Some men have a lower than normal testosterone level without signs or symptoms. In this case, no treatment is needed. However, if you are having uncomfortable symptoms of andropause, your doctor may prescribe medications to replace the hormones you are lacking. Testosterone replacement is the most common treatment and may provide relief from your symptoms. Your doctor will help you decide if testosterone treatment is right for you.

Testosterone replacement therapy may be accompanied by the addition of pregnenolone, DHEA, aromatase inhibitors, chrysin, and other supplements.

Making simple lifestyle changes like quitting smoking, exercising regularly, and reducing stress can help support your treatment and may be recommended by your physician as well.

Common Dosage Forms of Testosterone Replacement Therapy
At Belmar, our expert pharmacists compound bioidentical testosterone in a variety of dosage forms to suit specific conditions and individual patient preferences. These include:

- Oral Tablets
- Troches (Sublingual Tablets)
- Transdermal Cream
- Oral Capsules
- Pellet Implants
- Injections

How Belmar Can Help
Belmar compounds bioidentical hormones in a variety of dosage forms, strengths, and combinations to help you feel more like yourself again. We also dispense other medications that target specific issues like hair loss, dry skin, or low sex drive. We’re focused on ensuring your doctor has the right medication available to fit your specific needs so that you can enjoy the best health and lifestyle possible.

If you are going through andropause, or are concerned about any of the symptoms mentioned, contact us for more information and start a conversation with your doctor. Together, you can decide if a compounded prescription from Belmar Pharmacy might be the right treatment for you.

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