

Frequently Asked Questions continued...

How can I reduce the risks of taking puberty suppression medications?

- Take calcium (1300mg per day) and vitamin D (1000 IU per day) supplements to help your bones stay strong
- Eat foods that are high in calcium and vitamin D
- Do bone-strengthening exercises like walking, jumping, and weight lifting

How will using puberty suppression medications affect my fertility?

- Starting puberty suppression medications will stop the development of your gonads (ovaries or testes) at the stage they are now. If you stop the medication and choose not to start hormones like estrogen or testosterone, then your gonads will start developing again to make eggs or sperm.
- If you continue to use puberty suppression medications, and then start estrogen or testosterone, permanent infertility may be a risk.
- Talk with your provider about options to preserve your fertility before starting puberty suppression medications if this is important to you.

How much do puberty suppression medications cost?

- Puberty suppression medications can be very expensive and the cost can change every year.
- Cost can vary depending on the type of puberty suppression medications you use.
- How much your insurance covers depends on your insurance plan and requires authorization from your plan. For example, some insurance companies will only help pay for Leuprolide acetate (the injection) and not Histrelin (the implant).

Call your insurance plan and ask:

- Are these medicines covered by my insurance plan?
- What is my deductible, copay and coinsurance?
- Have I met my deductible this year?

Help with Insurance

For help navigating the insurance process, you can ask to speak to one of our excellent Billing Specialists.

Options for Folks without Insurance

If you don't have insurance, you can speak with your provider or our Patient Resources Coordinator for options to access puberty suppression medications.

PUBERTY SUPPRESSION



Types of Puberty Suppression

INJECTIONS

Given in clinic usually every three months, sometimes once a month or every 6 months depending on the medicine used.

Examples are Leuprolide acetate or Lupron, Eligard, and Triptodur

IMPLANT

A short flexible rod that we place in the clinic under the skin in the upper arm. The medicine releases slowly and it works for 1-3 years.

Examples are Suprellin or Vantas

What will happen to my body?

Everyone is different. Most of the time, puberty suppression medications take a few weeks to start working. If you are in an early part of puberty, you might not notice anything change at all.

Puberty Stops

Puberty suppression stops changes that can happen during puberty like a deeper voice, growing facial hair, or growing breasts. If you have periods, bleeding will usually stop happening after 1-3 months.

Brain Development Continues

Your brain will keep growing and continue to mature. There are no known negative effects on brain development.

Growing Continues

You will keep growing like before puberty, but won't have a growth spurt.

Emotional Changes

Your mood may change by reducing the hormones that cause puberty. Some people may feel their emotions go up and down, some may feel their emotions are more stable, and some may experience no change. Many people find talking with a therapist helpful in exploring new challenges if they arise while you are taking puberty suppression medications.

Bone Changes

Hormones like estrogen and testosterone make bones stronger. Because these stay at low levels while you are on puberty suppression medications, you should take calcium and vitamin D to keep your bones healthy.

Hot Flashes and Headaches

These side effects sometimes happen, especially if you were in a later part of puberty when you started, but they usually go away within a few weeks.



Frequently Asked Questions

Every body is different, and the effects of puberty suppression medications will vary from person to person. These Frequently Asked Questions will give you the basics about how these medications work, what the potential benefits and risks are, and ideas about what to expect.

What are puberty suppression medications and how do they work?

Puberty suppression medications are a type of medicine called a "GnRH agonist." They pause puberty by stopping your brain from sending signals to your gonads (usually called ovaries or testes) that make your body go through puberty.

What can't puberty suppression medications do for me?

If you are at a later stage of puberty and already have certain changes like deeper voice, facial hair, or breasts, they will remain unchanged.

What are some risks of taking puberty suppression medications?

The long-term safety of puberty suppression medications is not completely understood. There may be long-term risks that we don't know about yet.

Potential risks may include:

- Suppressing puberty can make your bones weaker (lower bone density). This may get better when you stop the puberty suppression medications or start hormone therapy. We may check your bone health every 2 years while on puberty suppression medications.
- Mood swings
- Hot flashes, especially if the medication is started later in puberty
- Irregular vaginal bleeding, which usually stops after the first few months
- May cause there to be less tissue available for vaginoplasty surgery in the future