



SPÓRT ÉIREANN
SPORT IRELAND

HORMONE REPLACEMENT THERAPY (HRT) GUIDELINES

Please note these guidelines only apply to athletes and sports
Sport Ireland complete testing in, this will not apply to sports
and athletes who compete at a lower level (recreationally).

Perimenopausal and menopausal symptoms can be particularly difficult for some women and in some cases, doctors may prescribe medications or lifestyle changes to help address these symptoms.



Menopausal symptoms are usually caused by the fluctuation and decline of the two main sex hormones, oestrogen and progesterone. Some common examples of symptoms include changes in the duration and frequency of periods, night sweats, joint pain and mood changes. Though not suitable for all women, for many women, Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) is a medical treatment that may relieve some or all of these symptoms.

The two main hormones used in HRT are oestrogen and progesterone/progestogen. They are available in various formulations such as tablets, creams, pessaries, gels, sprays and also as an intra uterine system (IUS; also known as a coil). Standalone oestrogen and progesterone/progestogen products as well as combination products containing these substances are not prohibited for use in sport.

While not licensed for use in women in Ireland, occasionally testosterone supplementation is offered to women as part of HRT treatment. However, **testosterone is prohibited at all times in both men and women**. Testosterone, an androgen, has enhancing effects on the body, for example it increases muscle mass and strength, and these enhancements confer an advantage in sport.

HRT as prescribed for menopausal symptoms is generally permitted and does not require a TUE unless it contains testosterone or other anabolic androgens. Athletes should note that transdermal estrogen patches are not prohibited and are a common and safe route.

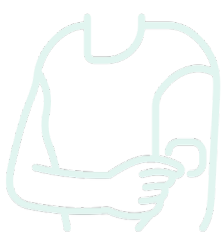


In the female body, any exogenous testosterone (e.g., tablet/gel) administered is added to the testosterone already produced in the body (endogenous). In males however, the hypothalamus strongly suppresses endogenous testosterone production in the presence of exogenous testosterone (negative feedback).

For females, this lack of strong negative feedback can lead to testosterone levels that are greater than those normally present in the body therefore it would be unlikely that a female athlete could meet the WADA criteria for obtaining a Therapeutic Use Exemption (TUE) for testosterone use. **Dehydroepiandrosterone (DHEA)**, a hormone and precursor of testosterone and its related compounds are similarly **prohibited at all times in both men and women**. It is also an unlicensed medication in Ireland and again WADA have indicated that it would be unlikely that a female athlete could obtain a TUE for DHEA use.

Tibolone is a substance that has oestrogenic-like, progestogenic-like and androgenic-like activity. Due to its conversion to delta-4 tibolone, a potent androgen, it is **prohibited at all times in both men and women**.

Occasionally other non-HRT medications are prescribed in conjunction with or instead of HRT to treat menopausal symptoms however they are outside the scope of this document. It is important to check the status in sport of all medications and/or supplements carefully. Medications purchased in the Republic of Ireland can be checked on <https://medcheck.sportireland.ie/> while medications purchased in Northern Ireland can be checked on www.globaldro.com.



Athletes should be advised not to source compounded or unlicensed hormone preparations online, as these may contain prohibited substances.

Athletes should declare the use of all medicines and or supplements taken in the 7 days before a test on the Doping Control Form if tested by Doping Control.

If an athlete is competing abroad, we recommend checking the International Federations rules for each competition.

Symptoms of menopause can be effectively managed without resorting to prohibited substances; athletes should seek advice from physicians familiar with anti-doping regulations.

± WADA do permit some men to be granted a TUE for testosterone use in well documented organic cases of male hypogonadism such as those resulting from genetic or structural defects, however it should be noted that TUE approval for male hypogonadism is very limited and TUEs cannot be granted for functional causes of low testosterone, such as aging, overtraining or obesity.

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If you require further information please contact us at cleansporteducation@sportireland.ie



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