

Hypogonadism

Hypogonadism is a condition in which the ovaries in women or the testes in men do not function properly. As a result, normal sexual development does not take place or is reversed.

What is going on in the body?

The gonads are the glands that secrete sex hormones. In men these are the testes. In women, they are the ovaries. The sex hormones promote a person's physical and sexual development. Individuals who suffer from hypogonadism may not have normal growth or sexual development.

What are the causes and risks of the condition?

Causes of hypogonadism include:

- inherited conditions
- certain types of tumors
- severe nutritional problems
- serious diseases such as kidney failure or [cancer](#)

The risks the individual faces are primarily related to the underlying condition. Hypogonadism itself causes few problems and can usually be treated.

How is the condition diagnosed?

The symptoms a person has, combined with the findings of a physical exam, give an indication of hypogonadism. Often, further tests are needed. These may include blood tests or special x-rays

What can be done to prevent the condition?

Most of the time, nothing can be done to prevent the condition.

What are the long-term effects of the condition?

Children who do not go through puberty like their peers often experience psychological distress. Most long-term effects from the condition are related to the underlying cause of the hypogonadism.

What are the treatments for the condition?

Treatment may include steps to address the underlying cause. This may mean removing a tumor. Hormone replacement is necessary to treat hypogonadism. These medications can be delivered by pill or by injection. Symptoms may improve considerably after treatment, and some individuals may then be able to produce children.

What are the side effects of the treatments?

Hormone preparations may cause [allergic reactions](#), stomach upset, or other side effects. Surgery carries the risks of infection, bleeding, and [allergic reaction](#) to the [anesthesia](#).

What happens after treatment for the condition?

Once the underlying cause is corrected, the individual may return to normal. If the affected person is a child, he or she may begin to mature sexually. Often, the underlying cause cannot be corrected. In these cases, lifelong hormone replacement is necessary.

How is the condition monitored?

Tracking a person's symptoms and physical appearance may be all that is necessary to monitor hypogonadism. Periodic blood tests may be needed to monitor hormone levels. Any new or worsening symptoms should be reported to the healthcare provider.