

Endocrinologist and Hormone Replacement Therapy

The only ENDOCRINOLOGIST who works with transgender people for Duluth, Minnesota is Dr. Derrick Aipoalani. He has seen between 20-40 transgender people in the past several years.

Before seeing anyone, a transgender individual must see a mental health provider to get the correct diagnosis and to help with stress, depression and anxiety.

The Mayo Clinic just started doing gender reassignment surgeries.

FTM - Testosterone (T) - injection (cheapest and most common) or patch or gel on shoulders (more expensive)

MTF - Estrogen - injection (cheapest and most common) or oral pill or a surgical pellet placed under the skin

Testosterone blocker - injection once a month

The typical Testosterone dosage is anywhere from 300-1000mg. If it is mentally and emotionally comfortable, doctors are starting to recommend that a transgender individual consider taking a lower and more gradual dosage of Testosterone for lesser side effects.

When MTF transgender people are taking estrogen, the hormones can feel out of balance for a while. It is important to be in contact with your endocrinologist. One of the biggest mistakes made is get blood work to close to the next visit and not evenly in between the 2 visits to the doctor for hormone replacement therapy (HRT). The levels of estrogen will be lower closer to the next appointment and cause the patient and doctor to think the levels need to change causing more problems. Getting blood levels checked halfway in between appointments will show a better balance of hormone levels. One must listen to their body to find the right dosage and right form.

Notes from conversation:

“Some transgender patients have tried (the) black market or some pills off the street because they couldn’t get in to see a doctor that would listen to them or treat them appropriately,” he said. “They don’t know where to turn. And they really want to live the other role, so they’re willing to do certain things which for their health might not be the best thing.”

Hormone Therapy - quote from a patient

“The hormone therapy reduced stress and anxiety. It was a positive effect on my mental health, which improved even before physical changes began to occur. The air was fresher; the sun was brighter.”

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