



## **Information About Puberty Blockers**

Before considering a medication for yourself/your child to put puberty “on hold,” there are several things you need to know. There are possible advantages, disadvantages, and risks with puberty blockers. It's important that you understand all of this information before any medication treatment begins.

Please read the following carefully and ask any questions. We want you to be very comfortable and sure of what pubertal blockers offer.

Here are some additional resources:

<http://www.impactprogram.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Kuper-2014-Puberty-Blockers-Clinical-Research-Review.pdf>

[https://www.ted.com/speakers/norman\\_spack](https://www.ted.com/speakers/norman_spack)

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/growing/>

**Recommendations for Hormone Therapy/Puberty Suppressing Hormones** (based on UCSF, WPATH, and the Pediatric Endocrine Society)

In order for adolescents to be candidates for puberty suppressing therapies, QueerDoc looks for:

1. A long-lasting and intense pattern of gender nonconformity or gender dysphoria (whether suppressed or expressed);
2. Gender dysphoria emerged or worsened with the onset of puberty;
3. Any co-existing psychological, medical, or social problems that could interfere with treatment (for example by compromising treatment adherence) have been addressed, such that the adolescent's situation and functioning are stable enough to start treatment;
4. The adolescent has given informed consent and, particularly for minors, the parents/guardians have consented to the treatment and are involved in supporting the adolescent throughout the treatment process.

### **What are the different medications that can help to stop the physical changes of puberty?**

The main way that the physical changes of puberty can be put on hold is by blocking the signal from the brain to the organs that make the hormones of puberty. These hormones are estrogen and testosterone. Estrogen is made by the ovaries. Testosterone is made by the testicles.



The medications are commonly called Puberty Blockers. This medication is effective for both people with ovaries and those with testicles. It can be started just after the early physical changes of puberty.

For trans feminine young people there are alternative medicines that can block the effect of testosterone. The most common medication of this type is called spironolactone. Spironolactone is not as effective at blocking puberty in trans feminine young people, but it is much less expensive.

Every medication has risks, benefits, and side effects that are important to understand before starting. It is also important to know how they work.

Please initial each statement on this form to show that you understand the benefits, risks, and changes that may occur from taking these medications.

### **Medications for Blocking Puberty**

\_\_\_\_\_ I know that the Puberty Blockers are used to help temporarily suspend the physical changes of puberty.

\_\_\_\_\_ I know it can take several months for the medication to be effective. I know that no one can predict how quickly or slowly an individual's body will respond.

\_\_\_\_\_ I know that using this medication to block puberty in transgender youth is an off-label use. This means it is not approved by the Food and Drug Administration for this specific use. However it has been used for many years to block puberty in children who started puberty earlier than is healthy. I know that using a puberty blocker is based on the judgment and experience of our health care provider and is supported by the Society of Pediatric Endocrinology.

\_\_\_\_\_ I know that the medication is not permanent. If treatment is stopped it will take about six months to restart puberty, beginning at the developmental stage the body was at when the puberty blocker was started.

\_\_\_\_\_ I know that by taking these medications, the body will not make the hormones of puberty, testosterone or estrogen. At this time, there is family support for "putting on hold" these hormones and the changes that they create during puberty.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that use of this medication may help avoid the unhappiness and trauma of unwanted puberty and pave the way for development in the affirmed gender, with a better fit between body and psyche.



\_\_\_\_\_ I know that this medication may help avoid the need for surgeries and other treatments (e.g. mastectomies for trans men, tracheal shaving or electrolysis for trans women) that would be required to try to reverse the effects of puberty.

\_\_\_\_\_ I know that, especially with trans feminine people (assigned male at birth or people with testes), use of this medication may improve safety and integration into society during adulthood. This is because trans feminine people who underwent male puberty are often unable to 'pass' as female because of irreversible changes that male puberty causes.

\_\_\_\_\_ I know that trans feminine young people (assigned male at birth or people with testes) can take spironolactone instead puberty blockers to block the effects of testosterone.

\_\_\_\_\_ I know that trans masculine young people (assigned female at birth or people with ovaries) may have a menstrual period 2-4 weeks after first taking this medication.

\_\_\_\_\_ I know that our family is encouraged to have ongoing consultation with a therapist experienced in gender issues while a puberty blocker is being prescribed.

### **Risks of Puberty Blockers**

\_\_\_\_\_ I know that the side effects and that the safety of these medicines are not completely understood. There may be long-term risks that are not yet known.

\_\_\_\_\_ I know that this medication may have an effect on final height. It is possible that trans feminine young people may reach a shorter height, more typical of people with ovaries or assigned female at birth. In trans masculine young people, delaying the onset of puberty may actually result in slightly taller height. (One of the reasons that people with ovaries are usually shorter than people with testes is that puberty started at a younger age). Neither of these outcomes is certain.

\_\_\_\_\_ I realize it is unknown whether there could be stalling of typical adolescent cognitive or brain development while on these medicines. If so, this will resume after discontinuation of medication.

\_\_\_\_\_ I know that other people may notice that puberty has stalled, which may become increasingly apparent with increased age and ongoing pubertal development in peers.

\_\_\_\_\_ I know that some transgender people experience harassment and discrimination. We are aware of resources for our family, and understand we may need to be advocates for safe



participation, free from harassment, in schools and other activities. We know we can ask our health care team for help with this.

### Prevention of Medical Complications

\_\_\_\_\_ I know puberty blocking medication is to be taken only as prescribed. I agree to tell my healthcare provider if there are any problems or side effects with the medication.

\_\_\_\_\_ I know that these medications can be stopped at any time, and that this should be done with the help of our health care provider.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand periodic check-ups are needed to monitor medical effectiveness and safety. This follow up may include:

Every 3 months:

Physical exam to document height, weight, and pubertal stage ("Tanner stage")

Blood work to check: LH, FSH, estradiol (affirmed males)/testosterone (affirmed females)

Annually:

Fasting blood work to check blood sugar, insulin, Hgb A1c (average blood sugar), lipids (cholesterol and related fats), and kidney and liver function

Radiography: Bone age (to monitor skeletal growth) by taking x-ray of the left hand and a bone density test

### Signed consent for treatment with puberty blockers:

Patient Signature (legal name): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Patient Printed (legal) Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Patient Preferred Name and Signature if different: \_\_\_\_\_

Legal Guardian 1 Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Legal Guardian 1 Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Legal Guardian 2 Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Legal Guardian 2 Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_