Progesterone Handout

Potential Benefits: Research is limited but some people report

- more rapid feminization
- help create larger, more developed breasts
- reduce testosterone production
- improve bone health
- improve cardiovascular health
- improve sleep and hot flashes
- improved emotional congruence - “girl-in-a-bottle”

Potential Risks:

- weight gain
- mood symptoms (irritability, depression, etc)
- high blood pressure (usually only an issue if you already have high blood pressure)
- increased risk of blood clots
- theoretically, there is increased risk of breast cancer and cardiovascular disease (heart attack and stroke)- but this data comes from a study of cis women over the age 45 using a different type of progesterone, so it does not often apply in gender affirming care

How to take it: Progesterone can be ordered rather affordably in capsule form. These can also be placed rectally which creates higher blood concentrations and bypasses the liver which may reduce side effects and stress on the liver. Alternatively, topical progesterone can be ordered from a compounding pharmacy.

- Everyone starts with: 100mg by mouth or rectally nightly for 1-2 months.

After the first 1-2 months there are options (If you like the effects and have adjusted well, we will usually continue it for 3-6 years.) Choose one of the following options:

- Option 1:
  - Day 1-Day 15- 100 mg by mouth nightly
  - Day 16-Day 30/31- 200mg by mouth nightly
- Option 2:
  - Day 1-Day 10: no progesterone
  - Day 11-Day 20- 100mg by mouth nightly
  - Day 20-Day30/31- 200mg by mouth nightly
  - If dropping from 200 back to zero is too uncomfortable: Some people do 200mg each night for 7-8 days and then do 100mg for 2-3 nights before going to zero again
- Option 3: 100-200mg by mouth nightly with no cycling of dose (cycling seems to worsen mood symptoms for some people)

***you can stop progesterone at any time if you are having side effects, although I often recommend a short taper off if taking more than 100mg daily**