

Trouble Shooting: ‘My pellets didn’t work last time’

Testosterone release from pellet implants is very **consistent**. They always release testosterone. Testosterone and stearic acid are the ingredients in the implants. Both are found throughout the body. Neither compression pressure nor added ingredients changes the release of testosterone. Studies have also shown that the site of implantation does not affect release. The dose or amount of testosterone may affect your results. Higher doses are associated with more relief of symptoms but also more hair growth.

The most common reasons NOT to get the ‘great results’ you have experienced in the past are:

1. **STRESS:** Increased stress, either physical or mental, will definitely affect how you feel physically and emotionally. Stress can even cause hot flashes. Stress can affect how long the pellets last. Symptoms may return several weeks sooner.
2. **MEDICATIONS:** *Anti-depressants, anti-anxiety medications, sleeping pills, blood pressure and other medications have side effects and can interfere with the effects of testosterone therapy. Side effects include: decreased libido and sexual performance, fatigue, anxiety, hot flashes, disruption of sleep patterns, memory problems, weight gain and depression (not feeling good).
3. **DIET:** A diet high in refined foods & processed carbohydrates and low in fat will definitely affect the result you get with testosterone. Fatigue, irritability and anxiety may be diet related. Whole foods, good fats and protein can beneficially affect mood and energy. Testosterone increases muscle mass and gets rid of fat deposits. Refined carbohydrates/whole grains can prevent weight loss usually seen with testosterone therapy.
4. **LACK OF CONSISTENT EXERCISE:** Aerobic exercise is a remarkable stress reliever. It increases energy and metabolism and decreases anxiety. Exercise improves sleep patterns. The best results from pellets are seen in people who exercise.
5. **LACK OF SUNLIGHT:** The lack of sunlight will affect mood, sense of well-being and physical energy. Lack of sunlight and subsequent low levels of Vitamin D are detrimental to health.
6. **HIGH ESTROGEN (Estrogen dominance):** Fluid retention, weight gain, breast pain, anxiety, aggression, PMS, insulin resistance, and lack of ‘sense of well being’ are all symptoms of excess estrogen. Often women cannot lose weight or belly fat when they have high levels of estrogen. Fat cells are a major source of aromatase, the enzyme that converts testosterone to estrogen. The **MEDICATIONS*** listed above also increase aromatase activity and raise estrogen levels.

High levels of estradiol can also interfere with the beneficial effect of testosterone. Exercise, whole foods, fiber, losing weight and getting rid of refined carbohydrates can help lower estrogen levels. Occasionally a medication (Arimidex®, Letrozole®) may be prescribed or given with the testosterone in the implant (anastrozole) to reduce estrogen excess.

Often complaints of ‘pellets not working’ occur during the winter months. The stress of the holidays, change in diets, lack of sunlight (especially in Ohio), change in activity level can all affect how you feel both mentally and physically. Some patients do much better with a higher dose of testosterone in the winter months, especially those with ‘seasonal affective disorder’.

The factor that doesn’t change is the steady state release of testosterone from the implant.