

# Testosterone Replacement Therapy (TRT)

**CLINICIAN  
INFORMATION**

The Ontario Drug Policy Research Network (ODPRN) conducted multiple studies on the effectiveness, safety, and accessibility of TRT using multiple research methods. Here are our key findings:

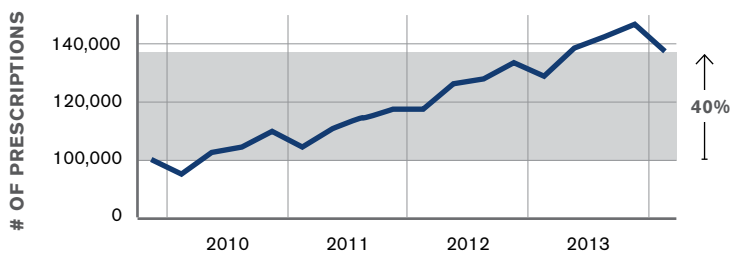
## About TRT

TRT is a common treatment for men suffering from primary or secondary hypogonadism due to conditions such as genetic disorders, tumours, trauma, or radiation.

- Indicated to treat symptoms associated with a decline in testosterone levels due to primary or secondary hypogonadism.
- Not paid for by most public drug programs in Canada to treat natural decline of testosterone due to aging.

## TRT use has increased in recent years

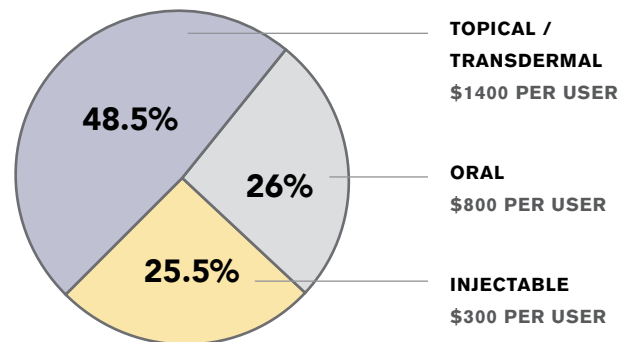
Overall use is rising in Canada. Over the last four years, there has been a 40% increase in the number of TRT prescriptions.



Since 2006 there has been a rising use of certain testosterone products.

Topical TRT, which is the newest and most expensive type, has seen the largest growth in prescribing. This has increased the cost of TRT to the Ontario Public Drug Programs.

Percentage of TRT prescriptions reimbursed by the Ontario Public Drug Program and approximate annual cost per user (2012)



An increasing trend in use is prevalent across all age groups in Ontario.

In a 12 year period, TRT use has increased in older males by 24% and in younger males by 44%. Slightly less than half of TRT users are under 65 years of age.

Laboratory testing of testosterone levels is required before prescribing TRT. However, some men are not being tested for low testosterone.

## The effects of TRT have not yet been established

### Key findings:

- Compared to placebo TRT does not improve quality of life, erectile dysfunction, libido, or depression.
- There is no conclusive evidence for adverse events related to TRT due to limited and conflicting data. Health Canada reviewed TRT and has warned of potential cardiovascular side effects.

## For more information...

- ✓ Refer to the [Endocrine Society guidelines](#) on how to appropriately prescribe TRT.
- ✓ Visit the Ontario Public Drug Programs website to determine which patients are eligible for TRT treatment and how to access TRT through the Ontario Drug Benefit program. <http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/public/programs/drugs/>
- ✓ View the final report at [www.ODPRN.ca](http://www.ODPRN.ca)