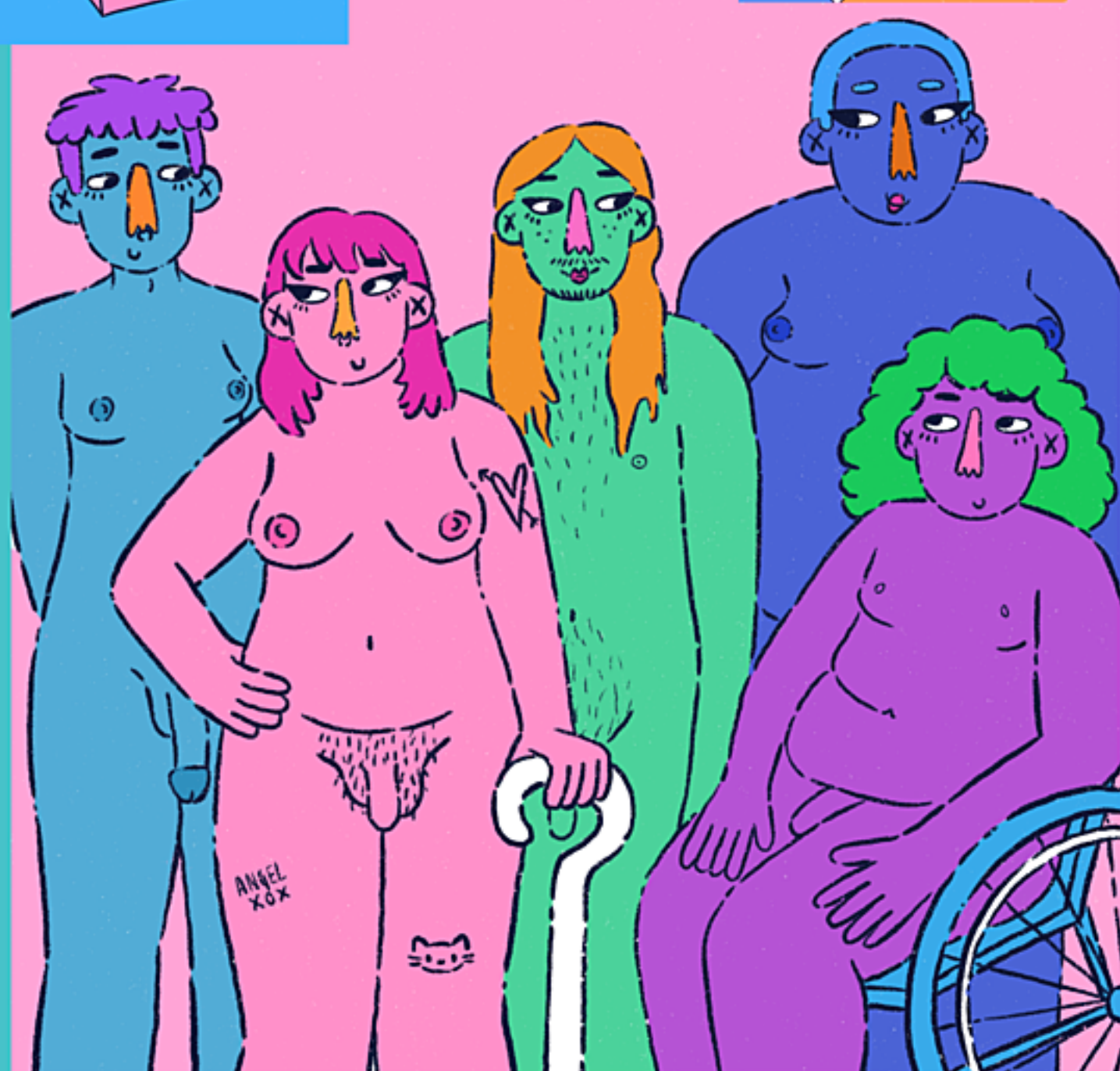


WHAT OTHER GUIDES DON'T TELL YOU ABOUT HRT...

WITH..

- TIPS + TRICKS
- COMMUNITY KNOWLEDGE
- GOING IN-DEPTH ON THINGS THAT USUALLY ONLY GET A MENTION

(BTW: We talk about genitals a lot because trans people deserve to know how to take care of our junk so it's happy & have good sex if we want!)



THE TRANS HEALTH
EMPOWERMENT

www.transhealthempowerment.org



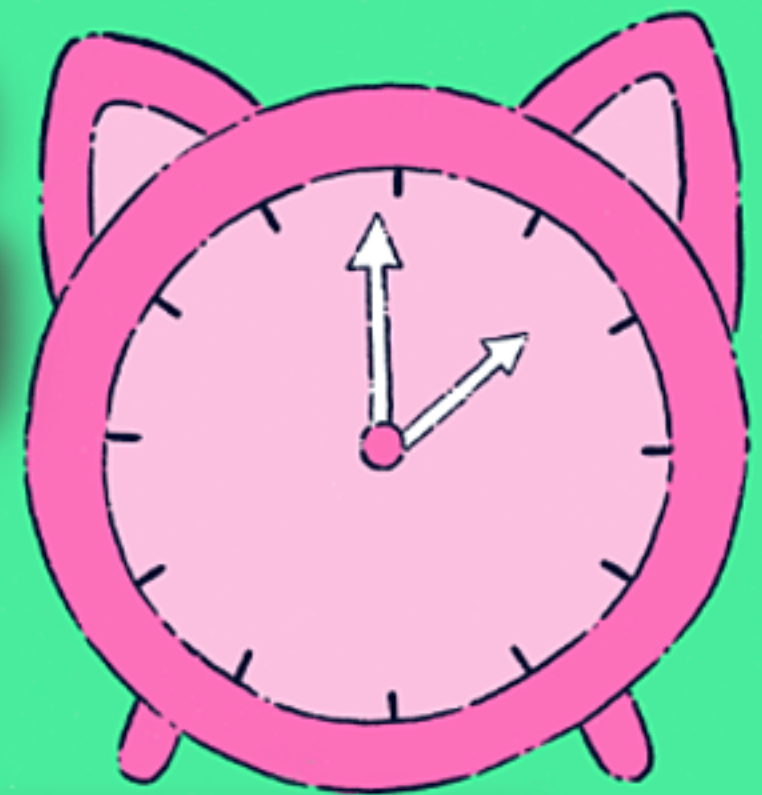
TIMELINES: TRANSITION ENDS WHEN U WANT

PEOPLE WHO EXPECT US TO HAVE ANSWERS R BORING

There is a long history of trans people being expected to answer all the questions cis people have about our genders, but we don't have to keep answering! Expansiveness is beautiful and can be a powerful teacher for people.)

TRANSITION IS FOR LIFE, NOT JUST FOR CHRISTMAS

For some people, they will feel their transition is a lifelong journey, maybe one that is constantly changing and evolving as their understanding of their gender and what they want + need to feel affirmed evolves.)



TRANSITION WITH A FINAL GOAL

Some of us feel like there is a final goal to our transition & when that is achieved our transition will be complete. This final goal could be a surgery, or it could be some form of social transition, without ever involving medical transition: neither is the "right" way to "do" transition.)



WHO GODDAMN KNOWS?

Plenty of trans people will have no idea what the future holds. Many of us are in a constant state of self-discovery. Many of us don't want to close any doors to different options of what our gender or transition could look like! Some of us deliberately refuse to name an end goal, or even what their gender goal is right now, in resistance to the demand we have to have all the answers! Gender can be explorative, and a great place to practise not knowing!

CHANGING YOUR CHANGES BACK AGAIN

IF I COME OFF HRT WILL MY CHANGES REVERT?

This is a big question! Some changes do, some don't.
For specific answers on this you're best going to our website:

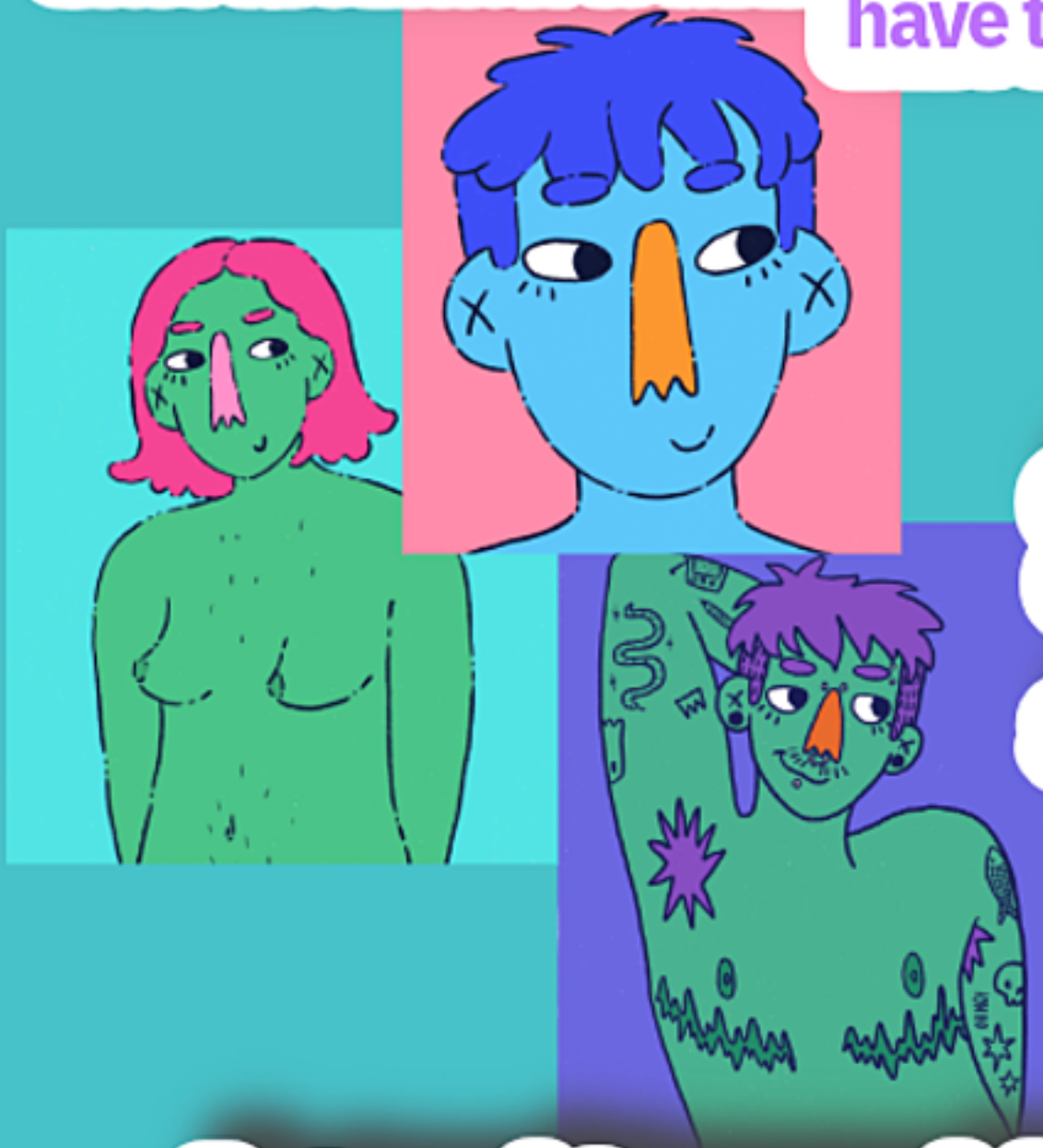
www.transhealthempowerment.org

Scan the QR code to get there:



REMEMBER: U CAN UTILISE NON-HORMONAL OPTIONS

If you want to revert changes that don't revert after coming off HRT, **you're often in a similar position to trans people using the other kind of HRT!** So there's loads of info out there about how to address the changes caused by the hormone you took, **you just might have to change where you're looking!**



For example, **if you were on testosterone** and are left with changes that won't revert just by stopping, transfems are absolute geniuses at coming up with ways to hide changes you don't like, have loads of info on a hundred different surgical (and increasingly non surgical: like fillers) options and surgeons.

I'd suggest focusing on transfem knowledge: the boys are great but the transfems have decades of skill refinement you can learn from!

Similarly: transfems, I promise we aren't useless when it comes to **advice on dealing with oestrogen changes!** We've got this stuff pretty down too!

In general, trans people have been adapting to body parts they don't like for milenia and there's so much info out there. HRT reversal is not the be all and end all!

CAN I TAKE A HIGHER DOSE IF I'M NOT SATISFIED WITH MY EFFECTS?

I'M NOT SEEING THE CHANGES I WANT

If you are feeling dissatisfied with your effects, the best thing you can do is get a blood test to check your levels and book an appointment with your healthcare provider in order to discuss both where your hormone levels are at and the physical changes you are dissatisfied with.

If your bloodwork shows your levels are indeed on the low side, you should be able to have a discussion with your provider about increasing your dose and/or the frequency of your dose (depending on the method of your administration). If your bloodwork finds that your levels are too high for it to be recommended for you to increase your dose, it's best to try and address the specific changes (or lack thereof) you are feeling unhappy about, so that you can explore possible options to address them that do not involve increasing your dose.

OTHER METHODS OF ACHIEVING CHANGES IF YOU WANT TO APPEAR MORE "FEMININE"

Anything from changing the anti-androgen you are on, to trying wearing breast forms, to considering surgical routes.

OTHER METHODS OF ACHIEVING CHANGES IF YOU WANT TO APPEAR MORE "MASCULINE"

If you are unhappy with your facial or body hair growth, you could try applying minoxidil to the area in which you are looking to increase your hair growth.

Or if your periods haven't stopped and that is your main cause for concern, there are other ways you can work with your healthcare provider to try and reach the cessation of your periods.

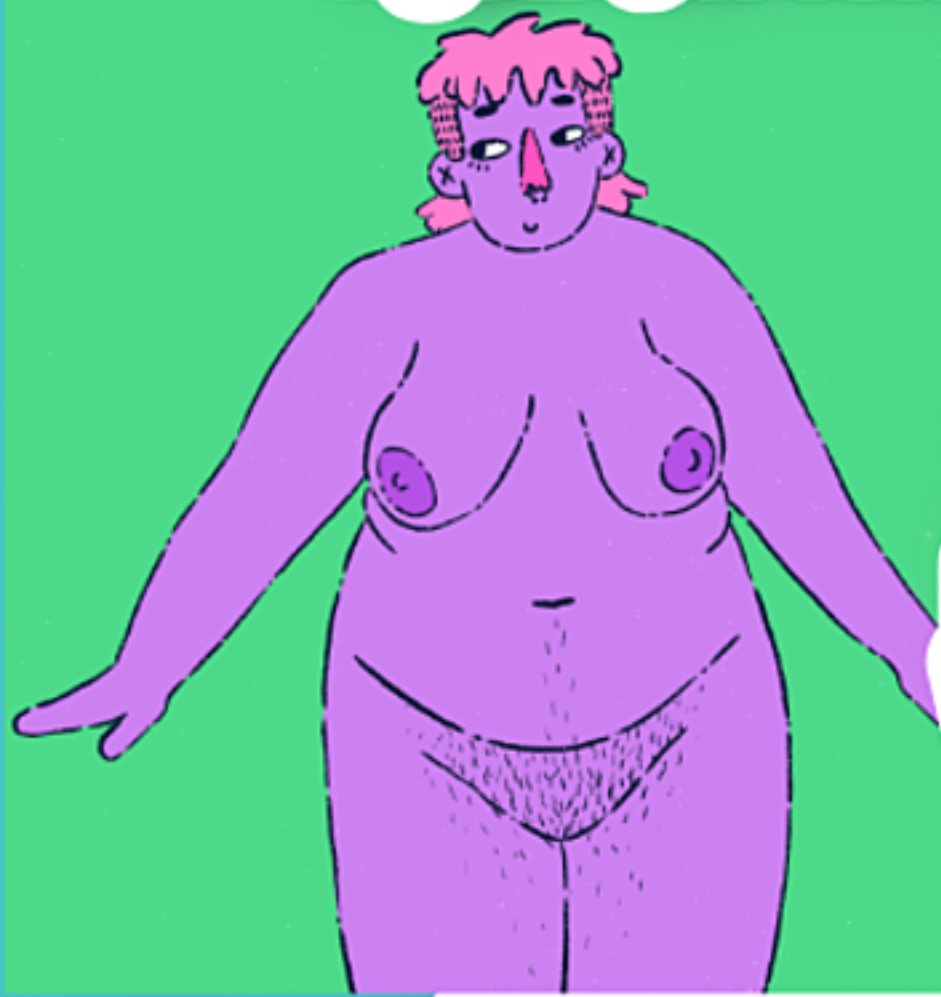
ASK FOR ADVICE FROM PEOPLE WHO ARE TRYING TO ACHIEVE SIMILAR GOALS!



BODY CHANGES CAN BE REALLY, REALLY SLOW

THEY MAY TAKE AGES TO BEGIN

Despite many hormone guides and doctors telling you that you'll see changes in a few months or the first year, it may take a full couple of years, or even longer, for them to become noticeable.



DIFFERENT BODY PARTS WILL CHANGE AT DIFFERENT RATES

Some body parts may start changing just a couple months in, but that doesn't mean you won't have to wait years for others. One change is not an indicator of your rate of change as a whole.)

SORRY TO SAY IT AGAIN, BUT, BE PATIENT!

Fat redistribution can be really, really slow. As can muscle loss. This doesn't mean they won't happen. If you can hold out, it is often a good idea to wait at least 3-4 years before pursuing body shape related surgeries as you could still have a lot of HRT change to come (which is a lot cheaper lol)



THE FORBIDDEN SECRETS OF OESTROGEN

myth busting + sharing the stuff no one else-
tells you



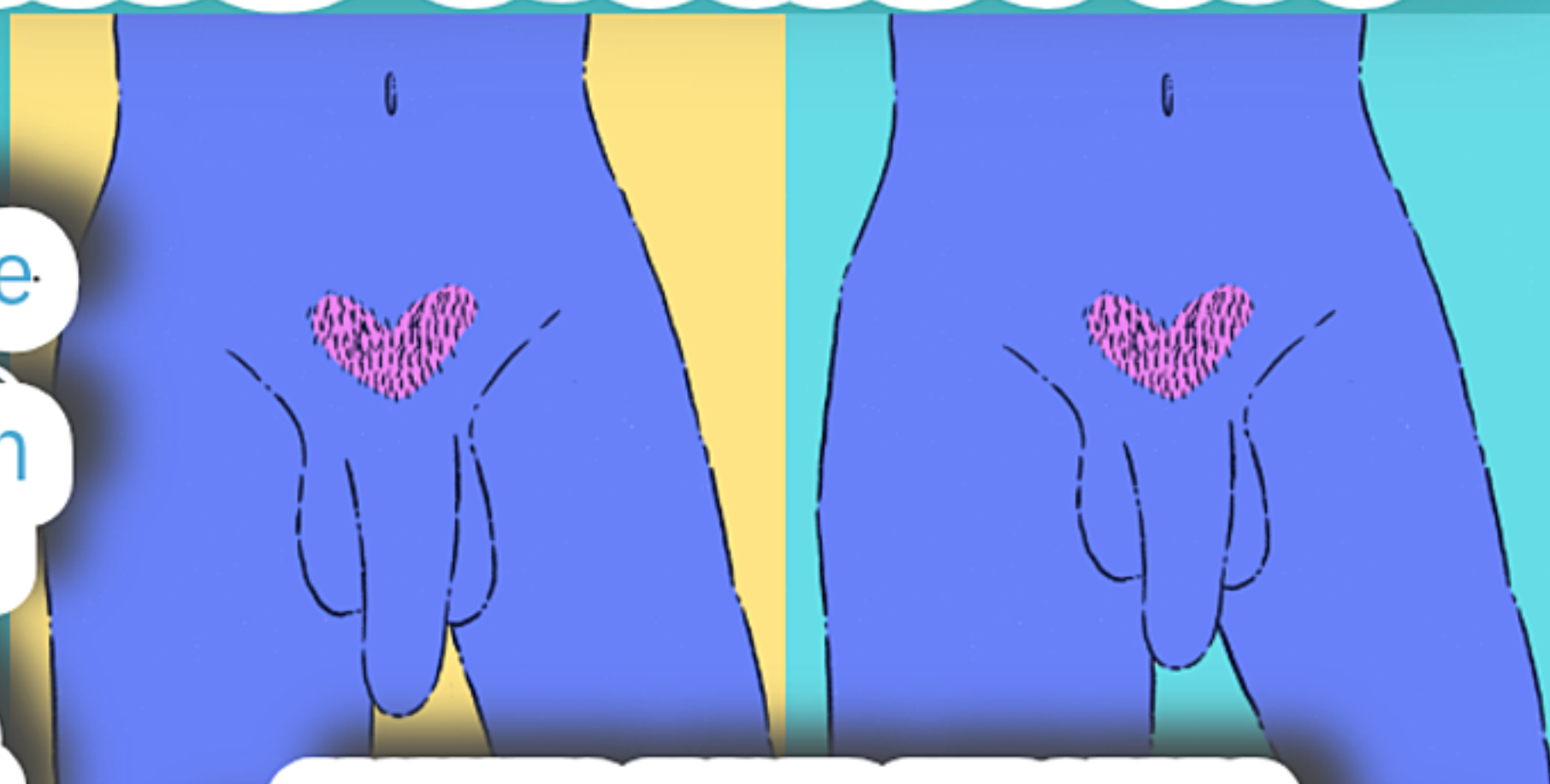
"USE IT OR LOSE IT" PREVENTING ATROPHY

WHAT IS ATROPHY?

HRT causes both the penis and the testes to shrink

The ability to achieve and maintain erections typically reduces, with them also being softer. This typically intensifies over time. Spontaneous erections, such as morning erections, may become less common and/or stop entirely.

Pain during erections may arise from shrinkage if you are no longer getting erect regularly.



HOW TO AVOID ATROPHY:

Many find if they masturbate or have sex regularly that atrophy is mitigated or even nonexistent

Some people have described finding that even just getting erect a few times a week, even with no further stimulation, was sufficient to help them avoid atrophy

The phrase "use it or lose it" has become a common one regarding genital atrophy for this reason



PROGESTERONE WHAT IT CAN DO FOR U

The typical additional benefits of taking Progesterone with ur Oestrogen:

Increased "feminising" body effects

Increased breast growth

A change in breast shape (typically a rounder breast shape opposed to a more conical one that is more frequently seen in patients prescribed only oestrogen)

Increased sex drive

Improved ability to get/stay erect

Better sleep

Lowered risk of osteoporosis

Protection of cardiovascular health
Improved mood and reduced stress

Reduction in oily skin

Reduced "male-pattern" body odour

Regrowth of hair that was lost as a result of baldness

Increased anti-androgen effects

Can I access progesterone in the UK?

Progesterone is mostly unavailable under the NHS, as it is not part of the standard GIC HRT regimen.

If you have a very supportive provider they may consider it if you explain the benefits it could offer you



PRIVATE PROVIDERS

Progesterone is more commonly prescribed by private providers, however there is no guarantee they will prescribe progesterone! So check this is a service they offer before handing over any money!

BALDING? WATCH UR HAIR GROW BACK ON E!

CAN'T MAKE GUARANTEES BUT...

A huge percentage of people who have taken E (plus people who stopped taking T!) have reported that in the areas they lost hair to balding it has slowly started to grow back!



HAIR LOSS STOPS

Starting E is also likely to stop you losing further hair! This might not stop immediately but it should stop relatively soon.)

BE PATIENT!

This is typically quite a slow process, with fluffy baby hair style hair growing in the areas affected by balding first, and then these falling out and thicker hairs that match the hair on the rest of the head growing in

MEDICATIONS THAT MAY REDUCE EFFECTIVENESS OF E

(In alphabetical order)

Aprepitant
Bosentan
Carbamazepine
Efavirenz
Eslicarbazepine
Fosaprepitant
Fosphenytoin
Modafinil
Nevirapine
Oxcarbazepine
Perampanel
Phenobarbital
Phenytoin
Primidone
Rifabutin
Rifampicin
Ritonavir
Rufinamide
St John's Wort
Topiramate



(All of the listed medications have been deemed to, **potentially, moderately** affect the efficacy of oestrogen, based on **theoretical** evidence.)

As always, we are against **telling** you what to do, but we **strongly advise against** stopping any of these medications before discussing it with your doctor first.)

If you are concerned about a potential effect on the efficacy of your oestrogen, one option to discuss with your HRT provider may be to **increase your dose of oestrogen, instead of stopping the listed medication**, if the listed medication is something you find helpful.)

You should never have to choose between your health and accessing adequate hormone treatment!



THE FORBIDDEN SECRETS OF TESTOSTERONE

myth busting + sharing the stuff no one else tells you



T-DICK GROWTH ISN'T THE ONLY WAY UR JUNK WILL CHANGE

UR JUNK WILL SMELL DIFFERENT:

This usually applies to the smell of both your outer genital region and your wetness. Some people on T describe them as smelling more similar to the junk & pre-cum of someone with a penis *(who isn't taking oestrogen)*

THE SENSATIONS THAT FEEL GOOD MIGHT CHANGE,

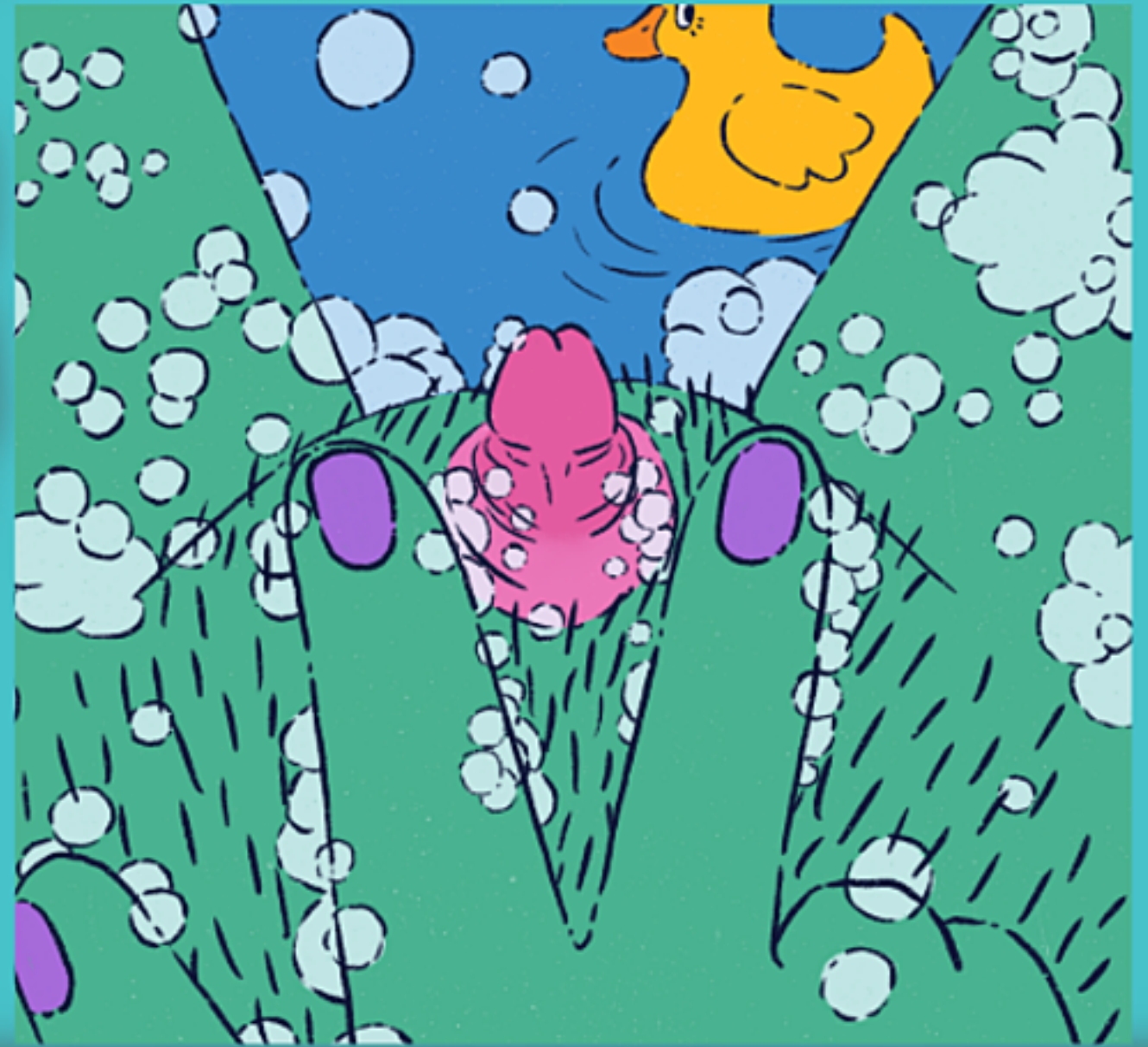
Often to be more akin to what cis men like: You might have to rediscover what is enjoyable in sex and masturbation.)

U'VE GOTTA REMEMBER TO CLEAN UR FORESKIN

(no, really, seriously) (+ you have to pull it back to do this) (even if it hurts a bit; it gets better the longer you're on T)

CHANGES EVERYWHERE:

As well as your dick getting hard, so will your labia, which will also develop a texture somewhat akin to testes & will look a little different too



DICK GROWTH MIGHT BE SOMEWHAT PAINFUL TOO

(But growing a dick is really fun (IMO) so it's worth it!)

BOTTOM GROWTH IS DIFFERENT FOR EVERYONE

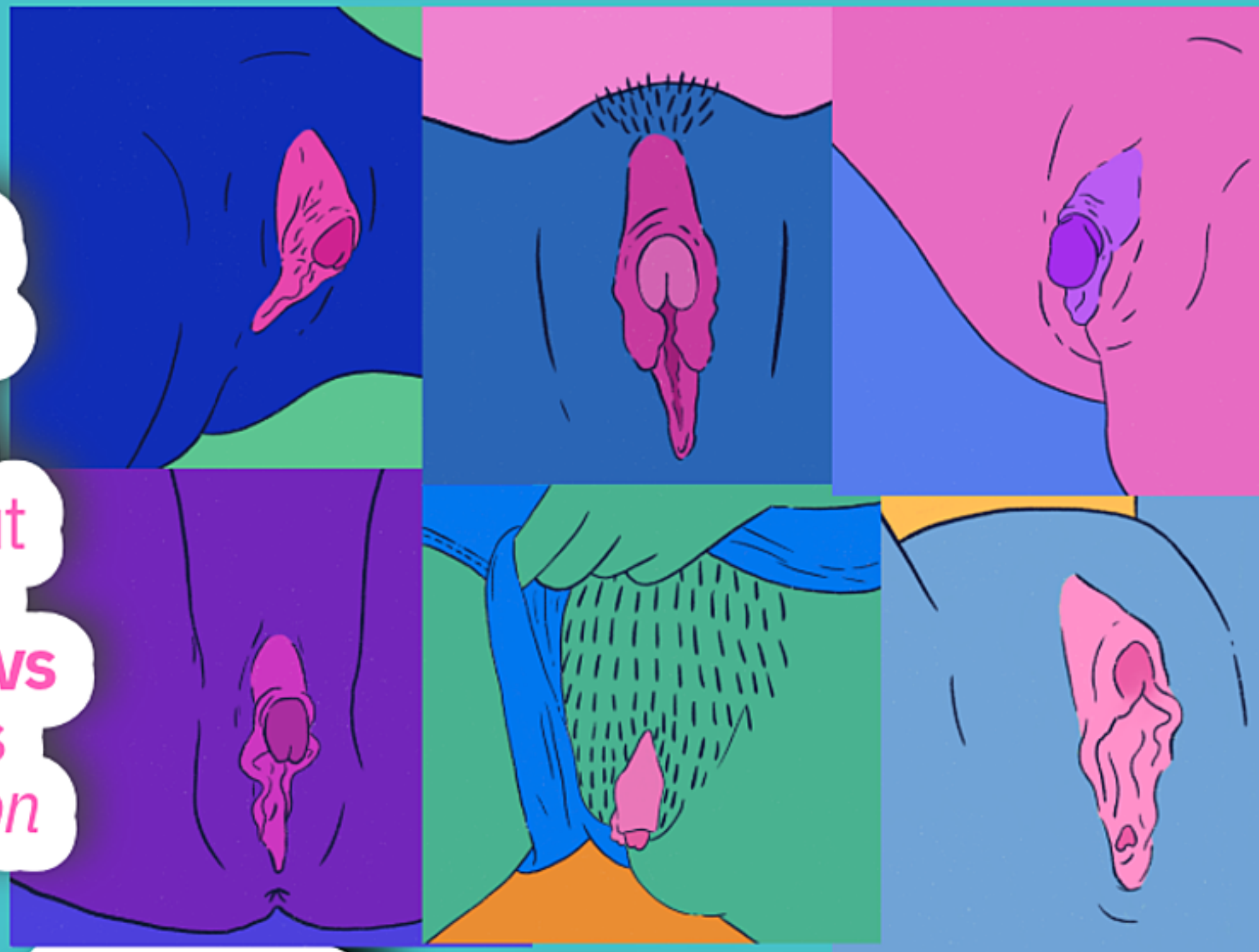


APPEARANCE:

The shape and overall experience of T-dicks is just like all genitals. Some will have longer foreskins, and there are "grow'ers" and "show'ers" when it comes to size and hardness

LENGTH:

Everyone will experience a different amount of growth, and this is impossible to predict. "Typical" growth ranges from **0.5-2inches**, but the **very rare** extremes are experiencing **basically none vs lengths of around 4 inches** (usually people who started on the bigger side)



SPEED:

Some people start to notice changes within just a couple of days, whereas others take a couple of months

VAGINAL OESTROGEN CREAM

WHY WOULD I DO THAT?

WHAT IS VAGINAL ATROPHY?

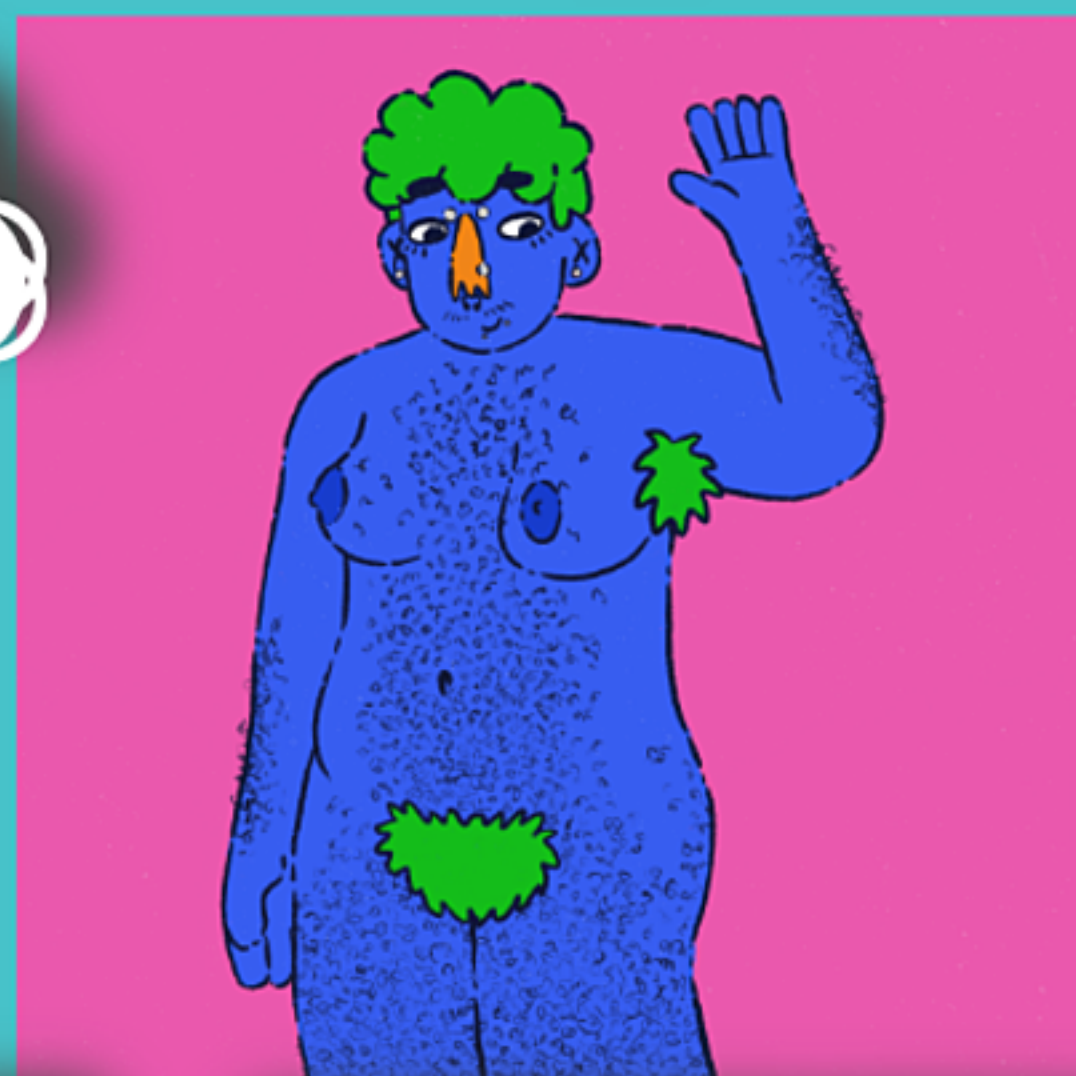
Some, not all, trans people on T will experience some degree of vaginal atrophy, this may lead to:

Less production of self-lubrication

Pain during penetration

Difficulty taking as much girth as previously possible during penetration

Moderately increased risk of tearing during sex due to thinner skin



OESTROGEN CREAM

If you notice any symptoms of atrophy you can notify your doctor and get prescribed a localised oestrogen cream to lessen the effects.

This oestrogen cream is **localised to only affect your vagina and will not have any other effects on your body**, so don't be afraid to take it.

There's no need to suffer in silence when an easy solution is out there!



YOU CAN STILL GET PREGNANT AFTER TAKING T

COMING OFF T TO GET PREGNANT

Doctors may make it seem like when you start T you are saying goodbye to any chance of carrying a child, and may strongly encourage you to engage in fertility preservation first. But the reality is much less simple: from looking at info shared amongst the trans community it seems rare that anyone who wants to carry a child, and comes off T to do so, is unable to do so.. It's important to caution this evidence is based largely on social media posting and so should not be interpreted as conclusive, or a guarantee that T's effects on fertility are reversible, it is simply meant to present a challenge to the simplistic narrative too often presented that taking T is the end of any possibility of fertility, or carrying a child

IT'S BEEN DONE BEFORE (LOTS):

While doctors may make it seem like retaining your fertility if you take T is highly unlikely, trans parents who carried their child are becoming so common the media has stopped reporting on it - that's how you know it's everywhere!



NOT A CONTRACEPTIVE

While getting pregnant whilst on T is very unlikely, it's also not totally uncommon either, with it being increasingly common to hear stories of people who had unexpected pregnancies because they assumed T was rendering them infertile.

FINASTERIDE

A WAY TO TAKE MORE CONTROL OF YOUR EFFECTS

WHAT IF I DON'T WANT EVERY EFFECT OF T?

Finasteride offers you a little extra agency when it comes to getting what you want from T

WHAT EFFECTS DOES IT PREVENT

Finasteride lessens or prevents the following changes:)

Bottom Growth (+ therefore erections)
Increased Hair Growth (all over your body)
Facial Hair Growth
Increased Sex Drive

IS THERE ANY WAY TO PICK AND CHOOSE WHAT EFFECTS IT INFLUENCES?

No, unfortunately it's a package deal.
If you want increased hair growth anywhere but not the other stuff you could try minoxidil (*page 13*) but other than that you have to decide on balance if all the changes are worth it for you



TRANSMASCS CAN GROW INCREDIBLE BEARDS!

IF YOU CAN'T MAKE ENOUGH T, STOREBOUGHT IS FINE:

It seems as though someone managed to convince people taking T to expect inferior facial hair to cis men. There's no reason for this, except we have to account that many of us are starting T decade(s) after our peers began puberty so it might take us a while to catch up!

Beyond that, there is no reason your T coming from an outside source will make your beard any less coarse, dark or full - depending on a mix of your genetics and luck!



BUT WHY DO I NEVER SEE ANY THEN?

Good beards are hard to come by, cis or trans. Most cis men can only grow at-best a medium level beard! So if you're following even a couple hundred people on T, a huge number will be too early in puberty to have a chance, and then you're relying on one of the ones you left to be in the lucky minority to reassure you, and then maybe you assume all men with strong beards that you see in public are cis...??!

ALSO...!

I have actually seen some! Including in real life! Really truly! So I can promise you: they exist!

I WANT A BETTER BEARD

I make no promises, but the next page might just have something of interest to you...Take a look!

WHAT IS MINOXIDIL AND HOW MIGHT IT HELP ME?

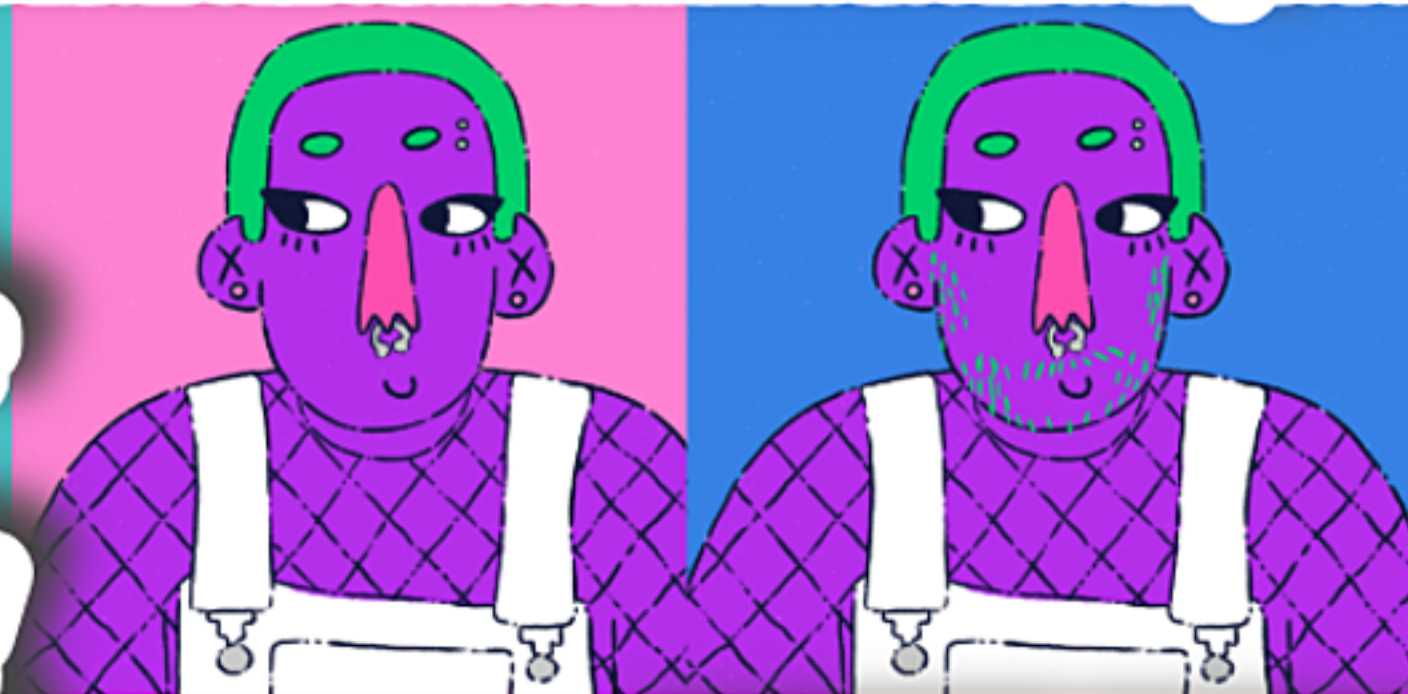
INCREASED HAIR GROWTH

If you aren't satisfied with your facial and/or body hair growth, **you can use this to help the hair to grow in faster/darker/thicker/coarser**. Other than the area immediately around the genitals, it seems you could use anywhere you are seeking the hair properties listed previously. Typically though, it is used among transmascs for facial hair growth, and there is evidence shared amongst the community of excellent results, **especially if you can be consistent in your application**

You have to apply the liquid twice a day for best results. **However, even inconsistent, infrequent application can still result in noticeable improvements**

FOR BALDING

Minoxidil has another common use: **treating hair loss caused by "male-pattern" baldness**. Again, you simply apply the liquid or foam to the areas affected, and with regular use, many people begin to see regrowth. **In order to maintain this regrowth, you must continue to apply the minoxidil**, otherwise you will simply begin to lose the hair again - unfortunately it's not a permanent change



DO I NEED A PRESCRIPTION?

There seems to be a mixed approach to this: many online pharmacies require you to describe your symptoms, but **you can also buy it on amazon and some online stores without any need for a prescription**, you just have to agree that you are 18+ to purchase.

If you have a supportive doctor, it may be worth asking them for a prescription as it is much cheaper on the NHS

VOICE TRAINING: NOT JUST FOR TRANSFEMS!

BUT I THOUGHT T GAVE YOU A DEEP VOICE ALREADY?

Most people do experience a significant change to their voice on T, however some people find they aren't satisfied with the change they get. Occasionally people only experience very minimal changes. Other people don't take T at all, but still want a deeper voice. Voice training can be an option for all these people.



WHAT CAN IT OFFER ME?

Many people on T struggle adjusting to their new voice and speaking from their chest rather than their head voice, which can leave the voice feeling strained, as well as making the voice sound higher and more nasal.

If you enjoyed singing before T but are struggling with your change in range, voice training can help you adapt and regain your enjoyment of singing!

For people who still don't feel confident in their voice, voice training can help them get more out of their changes and hopefully find a way to speak with more confidence!

It can also be useful to speak to a vocal therapist as your voice is dropping to help you adjust as it happens in real time!

ORAL TESTOSTERONE: NOT THE DANGER IT WAS THOUGHT TO BE?

HISTORY

It was previously widely thought, based on an older study, that testosterone delivered orally was toxic to the liver

LIVER SAFETY

However, a recent study found that oral testosterone carried no such liver toxicity over multiple years of the study, which included men of a range of ages.

The safety profile is consistent with non-oral testosterone replacement products



APPROVED BY THE FDA, FIRST SCRIPTS AVAILABLE

The U.S. FDA approved the first oral testosterone medication in March 2019, and the medication was made commercially available in February 2020

CAN I GET A PRESCRIPTION ON THE NHS?

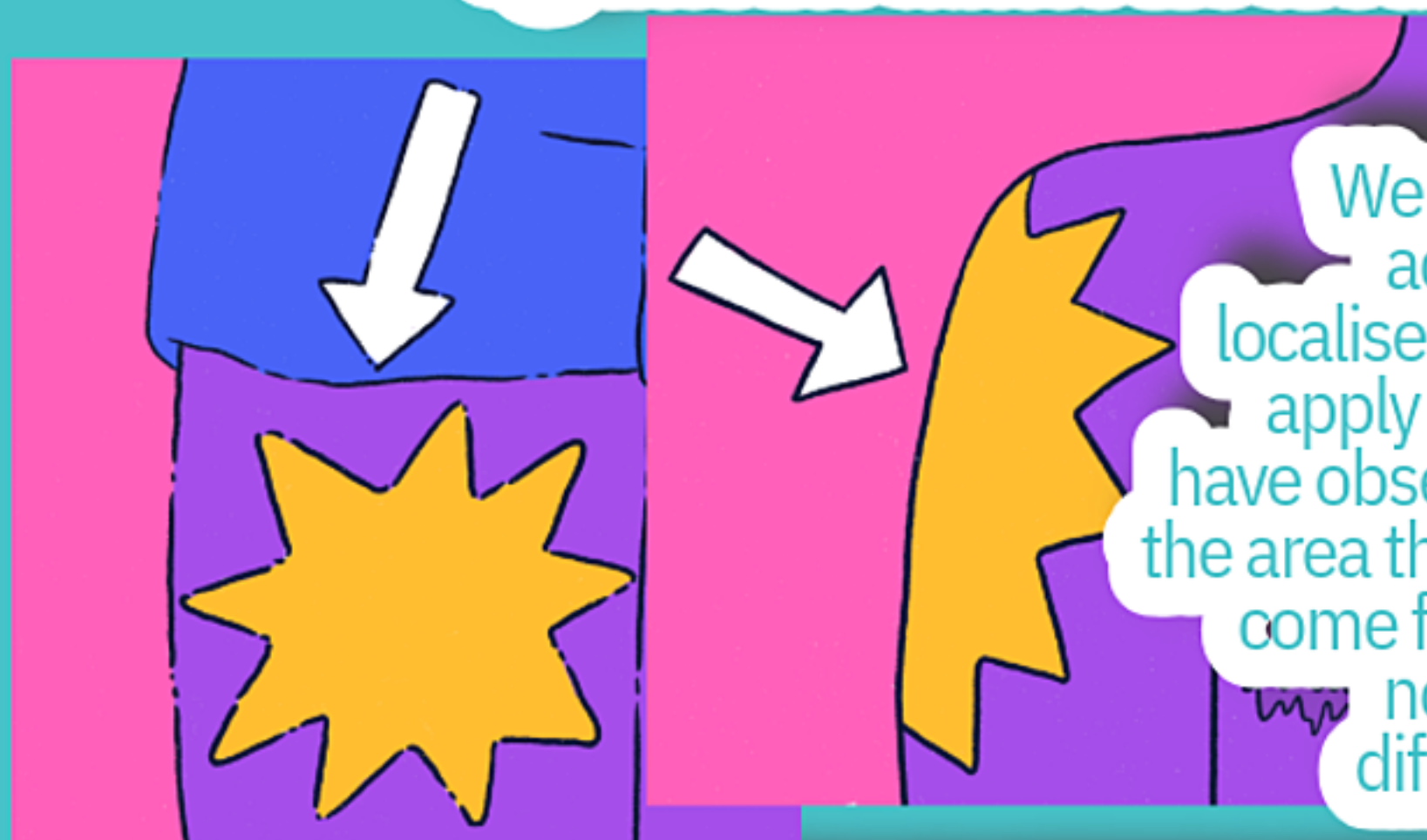
The NHS doesn't currently offer access to any oral testosterone medications



T-GEL APPLICATION ZONE

COMMUNITY REPORTS GOING AGAINST "OFFICIAL" MEDICAL ADVICE

There are two very commonly reported experiences regarding T-gel that go against the advice we are being given by our doctors.



LOCALISED EFFECTS

We are advised both by our doctors and the leaflets accompanying our prescriptions that there are no localised effects to gel, so it shouldn't matter where you apply it. But it's extremely common to hear that people have observed, most commonly, increased hair growth in the area they apply their gel. The most dramatic examples come from those who always apply gel to one arm and not the other - with growing examples of extreme differences in hair growth after multiple years on T.

DIFFERING ZONE RECOMENDATIONS BASED ON BRAND

The two most common application zones recommended by gel brands are the outer upper arms or the inner thighs, but several brands specify to only use the upper arms. However, especially because of the localised hair growth which many people don't want on their upper arms, it's becoming increasingly common for people to ignore this advice and apply on the inner thighs instead. People who have done this report no side effects, no negative effects on their levels, and localised hair growth no longer being an issue as it blends in with other thigh hair. So if you're worried about growing the long, darker & coarser hair people report seeing on their upper arms when applying there, it may be worth just trying application on the inner thigh and seeing if you have any issues! *

**We are not medical professionals and are only providing a community informed suggestion.*

dedication:

we dedicate this zine (this artwork, this knowledge) to all trans people (all genderfuckers, all queerdos). it wouldn't exist without our hard work of past, present, and future. this is a love letter written in the script of harm reduction; the sowing of seeds we've collected, in the hopes that they'll grow. we acknowledge the gifts we have received in our lifetimes in order to be here making this, and intend to pass them forward, magnified. following in the footsteps of all trans people before us, and carrying forward what they did, so that we now do not have to. we use all we learned from them to do now what we can to birth a future where it does not have to be done like this again. we dream of, and demand, and are making, a future where trans healthcare is truly by, and for, trans people, and no trans person ever goes without the care they deserve ever again.)

in love, rage, and solidarity

THIS GUIDE WAS PRODUCED BY TRANS HEALTH EMPOWERMENT

artwork by [@arlo.doodles](#) on Instagram

OUR WEBSITE IS
FULL OF WAY MORE
INFO WE COULDN'T
FIT HERE, SO
CHECK IT OUT!



www.transhealthempowerment.org



A project by Alliance for Care and Health Empowerment (ACHE)

Healthcare by the people, for the people. Disabled, neurodivergent & trans led community group building a better future for all.



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