TESTOSTERONE (TOSTRAN 2%) GEL FOR LOW LIBIDO IN WOMEN – IN INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

You have been given a prescription for Tostran 2% gel. As explained to you, testosterone is an important hormone which can really help your symptoms and quality of life. This leaflet explains about it in more detail. Tostran 2% gel is not currently licenced for low libido and is used ‘off label’. Off-label use means that the manufacturer of the medicine has not applied for a licence for it to be used to treat your condition. In other words, the medicine has not undergone extensive clinical trials to see if it is effective and safe in treating your condition. However, the medicine will have a licence to treat another condition and will have undergone clinical trials for this. However its use is recommended by many menopause experts as it has been shown to be beneficial in studies.

What is testosterone?
Women naturally produce testosterone from their ovaries and adrenal glands throughout their reproductive lives and although they produce much less testosterone than men, this hormone is thought to play an important role in the desire for sex (libido). Levels of testosterone in your body gradually decline as you get older.

What does testosterone do?
Testosterone may improve your mood, energy, concentration and also your sex drive (libido). As you get older and your levels of testosterone decline, you may find that you desire sex less often and that when you do have sex, it is not as pleasurable as it was previously. Low libido may improve with oestrogen therapy alone but in some cases testosterone may also be helpful, especially in women who have had their ovaries removed. In general, testosterone should not be used on its own in postmenopausal women but always with oestrogen or oestrogen/progesterone hormone replacement therapy (HRT) first.

How is testosterone given?
Your doctor will explain how to use the Tostran 2% gel. Testosterone is usually given as a gel which you rubbed onto non hairy areas such as the inner surface of your forearms or your thighs. It comes as a gel in a canister. The amounts used are pea sized quantities. Depress the dosing pump of the canister once to apply the gel every other day.

What are the side effects?
Clinical studies show that if used as directed for short periods of time, testosterone is well tolerated. The most commonly reported side effects are mild acne and increased hair growth (generally at the site where the gel is rubbed in). Any long term side effects of testosterone are not known. Although it is known that when testosterone is given by mouth, it lowers HDL (good) cholesterol. There are no long-term clinical studies evaluating the risk of conditions such as heart disease or breast cancer.