Informed Consent for Testosterone Therapy

The decision to use testosterone therapy is based on your quality of life. There is no evidence that using testosterone will help you to live longer, the hope is the therapy will improve your symptoms of deficiency. Therefore, the decision to use testosterone must be weighed against the potential risks of the therapy.

The risks of testosterone include, but may not be limited to the following:

1. **Prostate Cancer** – It is not believed that testosterone therapy causes prostate cancer, but the use of testosterone may make an existing prostate cancer more aggressive, meaning it may grow faster and increase the risk that it will spread.
2. **Prostate Enlargement** – Testosterone can make your prostate grow bigger, and this may lead to symptoms of increasing difficulty urinating, urinary frequency, nighttime urination and even the inability to urinate.
3. **Breast Cancer** – Testosterone may increase the risk of breast cancer in men. The link is not clear, but any male with a history of breast cancer or at high risk of breast cancer should be aware of this risk.
4. **Increased red blood cell count** – Testosterone can stimulate the body to produce more red blood cells, especially in men with uncontrolled sleep apnea. This can lead to the blood becoming “thickened,” and there have been reported cases of this causing stroke.
5. **Men with severe congestive heart failure should not use testosterone.**
6. **Increased Estrogen levels** – Testosterone can be converted to estrogen, and increased levels of estrogen can lead to enlarging and tenderness of breast tissue. There may be other unwanted symptoms of increased estrogen such as nausea and edema, as well as symptoms that are less well defined.
7. **Acne and increased oiliness of skin.**
8. **Mood changes, including increased irritability and anger, and fluctuations in mood.**
9. **Cough, specifically with injections of testosterone.**
10. **Male pattern balding.**
11. **Reduced sperm count and infertility.**
12. **Pain at injection or implantation site.**
13. **Skin irritation if using patches.**
14. **Potential for transfer of testosterone to partner or other person if using cream or gel.**
15. **Infection or expulsion of pellet if using implants.**
16. **Heart disease** – currently there is conflicting data about the risk of heart attack and the use of testosterone. Caution should be used in men with a history of heart disease and in men over the age of 65.

You should also be aware that there may be risks of long-term use of testosterone that are not known at this time. To date there have been no studies done on men taking testosterone for long periods of time. Frequently in medicine we are unaware of the potential consequences of long-term therapy, and this is the case with our current understanding of testosterone.