



An Overview of Growth Hormone Deficiency in Adults

Table of contents

	page
What this booklet is about	3
What is adult growth hormone deficiency (GHD)?	3
What is the pituitary gland and what does it do?	4
Pituitary hormones	5
What can happen to you?	6
Taking the next step	7

.....
What this booklet is about

This booklet will help you learn more about adult growth hormone deficiency (GHD). It will tell you about what may cause it, and how it may make you feel. Most importantly, it will help you decide what to do next.

.....
What is adult growth hormone deficiency (GHD)?

The growth hormone our bodies make is a major part of our lives. But, some people don't make enough of it. They need growth hormone replacement.

GHD can be caused by many things. Harm to the brain or pituitary (pih-TOÓ-ih-ter-ee) gland are causes. Surgery or radiation treatment of this gland can also cause it. Through tests, your doctor can tell how much growth hormone your body makes.

What is the pituitary gland and what does it do?

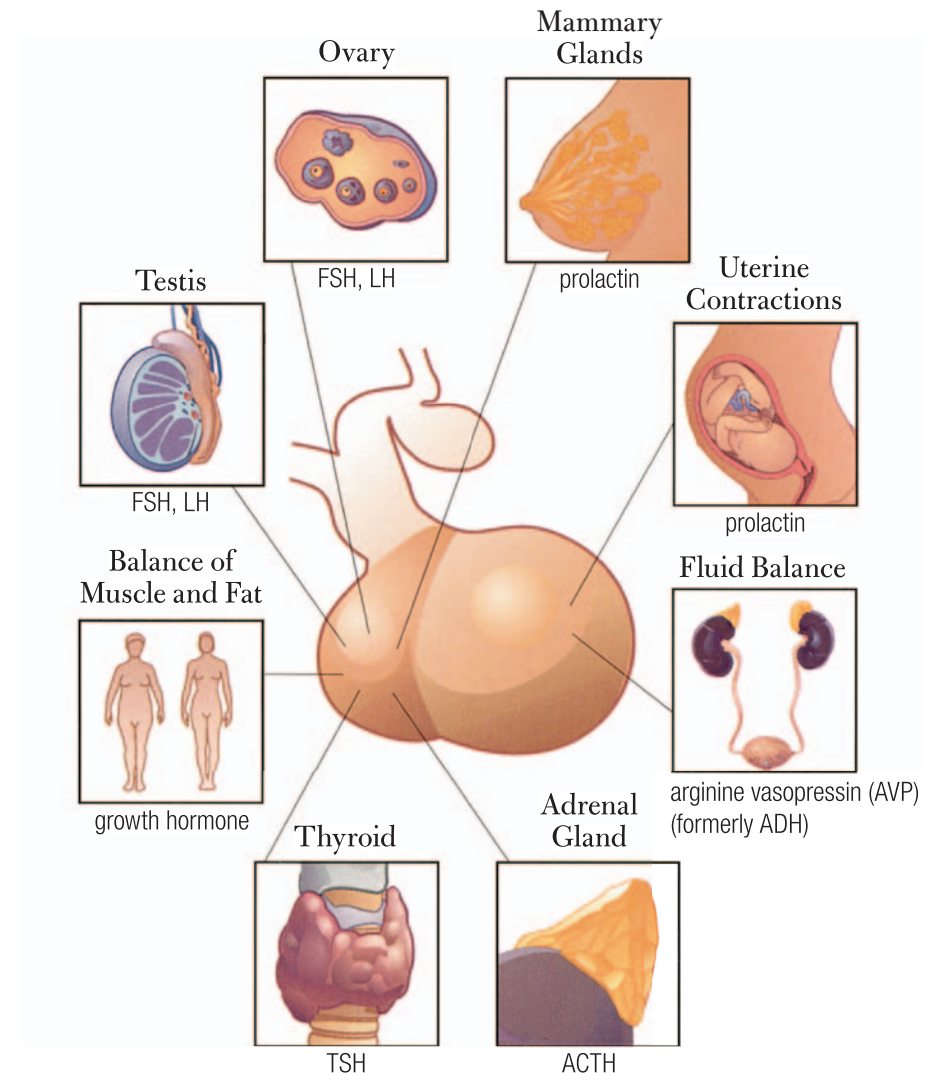
Pituitary hormones

- This pea-sized gland is found at the base of the brain
- It makes a group of hormones that control many of the body's functions. Some of these are growth, sexual development, and urine output
- A hormone is a substance made by an organ (often a gland). It is then carried by the blood to another organ (called the target organ). The target organ may make a different hormone in response. The brain monitors the hormone made by the target organ. It can tell the pituitary gland to make or to stop making hormones that cause responses in those organs
- Damage to the pituitary gland can cause a loss or reduction of its normal function. This may cause a lack of 1 or more of the hormones that it would normally make
- Because of this pituitary damage, you may need to have 1 or more hormones replaced. If your doctor prescribed 1 or more of the medicines listed in the box below, you may also be growth hormone deficient. If you take 1 or more of these medicines because of damage to the target organ and not because of damage to the pituitary gland, then it is unlikely that you have GHD. This should be confirmed by a special test performed by your doctor

Hormone replacement medicines include:

- Cortisol
- Progesterone
- Thyroid hormone
- Testosterone
- Estrogen

Hormones produced by the pituitary gland control many functions of the body.



What can happen to you?

If you are diagnosed with GHD, it may come as a surprise. That's because growth hormone-deficient adults may not "feel bad." However, most tend to notice symptoms or changes in the way they feel or look. Possible signs and symptoms associated with GHD include:

- **Body Shape**
 - Increased body fat, especially around the waist
 - Decreased muscle mass
- **Bone Strength**
 - More prone to fractures
- **Chemical**
 - Low level of IGF-I, a substance that's needed for growth hormone to work in the body
- **Energy**
 - Less ability to exercise

Taking the next step

The good news is that GHD can be treated. Choices about treatment for GHD should be discussed with your doctor. You will first need to have tests to see if GHD is the cause of the problems. These tests are called "stim tests." They are done by your doctor to see if you have GHD. (Your insurance company may require 1 or more of these tests.) The test measures how much growth hormone your body makes in response to a certain drug. Results from this test will help show whether your body is making enough growth hormone. If this amount is low, it shows you have GHD. This information will help you and your doctor choose the type of therapy that's best for you.

.....
More questions?

If you wish, write questions you may have in the space provided. Take this with you to your next visit with your health care professional.

