

## Hormones and Hair Removal

The presence of male pattern facial hair is high on the list of obstacles to overcome for most transwomen if transition from male to female is going to be successful. Many would even say removal of beard growth is essential to being accepted as a woman in day to day life. After all being regarded as any other woman in the street is the ultimate aim and no genetic woman I know would be happy with male pattern facial hair. Often the list of jobs to be tackled in order to achieve successful transition can seem daunting, so much so that many wonder where to begin and if indeed anything at all can be achieved whilst still in stealth. Removal of male pattern facial hair prior to needing to present oneself in public, even to the doctor or GIC would be on everybodys wish list. The question is, is it possible before starting hormone treatment and is it possible to keep it under wraps?

Chris Hart from Cristianos Laser Clinic has more experience than most when it comes to providing varying methods of hair removal for the Trans community. We asked her opinion.

“Yes, facial hair can be removed before taking feminising hormones. Our experience over the past 11 years has been spread over treatment of genetic male, genetic female, transvestite, transsexual male to female and female to male clients. Firstly we need to understand some basics about hair growth. The number of hair follicles we have is set before birth, during puberty these follicles respond to the level of androgens (male hormones) circulating in the blood stream. Some follicles will produce a coarse hair for example armpits, bikini line, male facial hair whilst others will produce a fine, vellus hair for example female facial hair. Increased male hormone levels will only alter the nature of the hair but will not produce more hair follicles. So for example a female to male client may start taking male hormones which will make their existing vellus hair growth much stronger and coarser. Therefore if hormones can only affect the nature of the hair growth but not produce more follicles it follows that eventually all the follicle in any given area can be removed and no amount of hormones can cause them to regrow.

In the situation of a male to female client wanting to remove male pattern facial hair this hair has developed in response to hormonal activity at puberty, stimulating the follicle to grow a coarse hair. The destruction of these follicles by any method electrolysis, laser or IPL is not reliant on the hormone level and therefore can be achieved regardless of the client being prescribed feminising hormones. Although there is some evidence that fine body hair can be reduced by female hormones they appear to have no effect on reduction of male pattern facial hair and this would certainly be our experience. Many people seem to be under the misapprehension that hair removal can only be successful if the client is taking female hormones. We have successfully treated many transvestite and genetic male clients wishing to have their beard growth removed the only long term difference being the need for a once a year top up treatment for these clients. In instances where we have treated female to male clients hair removal has taken more treatment sessions but has still produced long term results. If hair removal can be achieved under these scenarios than clients who have their facial hair removed and are subsequently prescribed feminising hormones at a later date are in the most commanding position of all.

Being greeted each morning with male beard growth is soul destroying for any transwoman no matter where they may be on their transitional journey. Certainly removal of dark facial hair by means of laser or IPL is easily achievable without raising the concerns of other people.

Electrolysis would prove a little more difficult. Being able to move forward toward your goal is a great boost psychologically as well as physically.”

Where individuals have consulted their GP Cristianos are contracted to several Primary Care Trusts to provide hair removal funded by the NHS. You can contact Cristianos in confidence at 0800-0850661 email your questions to Chris Hart [info@cristianos.co.uk](mailto:info@cristianos.co.uk) or visit their website [www.cristianos.co.uk](http://www.cristianos.co.uk)

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