

## growth hormone therapy patient glossary

A glossary of terms for use in discussing growth hormone therapy with patients, parents, and caregivers.

### Adipose

The word 'adipose' refers to fat or tissue made up mainly of fat cells.

### Adult Growth Hormone Deficiency

Adult Growth Hormone Deficiency (AGHD) is classified as either Adult Onset (AO) or Childhood Onset (CO).

AO: Patients who have GHD, either alone or associated with multiple hormone deficiencies (hypopituitarism), as a result of pituitary disease, hypothalamic disease, surgery, radiation therapy, or trauma

CO: Patients who were GH deficient during childhood as a result of congenital, genetic, acquired, or idiopathic causes

### Bone mineral density (BMD)

BMD is a measure of the strength of your bones based on the concentration of calcium and other minerals present in them.

### Catch-up growth

GHD results in growth that is slower than normal. When GHD is treated with human growth hormone (hGH) therapy, the body starts to grow faster and there is "catch-up" growth. In other words, the body tries to catch up to reach the limit of what is considered normal for that age. The age at which a person starts growth hormone therapy is very important, since the potential for catch-up growth may decrease as the child becomes older. The goal of treatment is to promote catch-up growth, enabling the child or teenager to reach his or her full potential adult height – the height the child would have reached if he or she did not have GHD.

### Closed epiphyses

The epiphyses (*i-PIF-uh-sees*) are centers of growth, extending from the ends of our long bones. The epiphyses remain open while a person still has potential for growth; when the epiphyses are closed, there is no potential for growth.

### Full growth potential

Everyone has a different full growth potential, the maximum (most) height a person can grow. A person's full growth potential depends on many things, including the height of the person's mother, father, and other family members.

### Glands

Glands are specialized parts of the body that make hormones which act as chemical messengers relaying messages from one part of the body to another. The pituitary gland sends out growth hormone, which leads to growth. There are numerous glands and hormones in the body that perform a variety of important functions.

### Growth hormone deficiency (GHD)

GHD is a condition in which a person's body does not make enough growth hormone. GHD may be present at birth or at any time during infancy or childhood. It is usually the result of the pituitary gland failing to produce enough

growth hormone. Fortunately, growth hormone treatment does exist in the form of a commercially produced, biosynthetic GH hormone replacement therapy.

### Human growth hormone (hGH)

A hormone is a special chemical made by our glands that can carry messages from one part of the body to another. Our bodies make many different types of hormones. hGH is the growth hormone made by the pituitary gland in humans.

### Hypopituitarism

Hypopituitarism (*high-po-PIT-oo-i-tar-ism*) is a condition in which the pituitary gland does not make enough of several different types of hormones, not just growth hormone. Some of these other hormones include thyroid-stimulating hormone (TSH), adrenocorticotrophic hormone (ACTH), luteinizing hormone (LH), and follicle-stimulating hormone (FSH). Children who have hypopituitarism are usually normal in size at birth and have relatively normal growth when they are infants. But during childhood, growth slows down considerably.

### Intracranial hypertension (IH)

This is a condition in which the pressure of the cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) inside the skull is too high. Intracranial hypertension, along with papilledema, vision change, headache, nausea, and vomiting, has been reported in a small number of patients on growth hormone therapy.

### Lean body mass (LBM)

Lean body mass is an estimate of the mass of your body minus the fat.

### Papilledema

Papilledema is a swelling of the optic nerve where it enters the back of the eye. It is caused by increased pressure from the cerebrospinal fluid that can cause headache, nausea, vomiting, and visual changes.

### Pituitary

The pituitary (*PI-too-i-ter-ee*) is a very small yet important gland in our bodies. About the size of a pea, it is located just below the brain and just behind the top of the nose. When triggered by signals from the brain, the pituitary gland sends growth hormone to our bones, which causes us to grow.

### Stimulation Test (Stim Test)

A Stim Test is a procedure used to determine if the pituitary gland, the gland that produces growth hormone, is doing its job. The test will “stimulate” the pituitary gland, helping the doctor understand if hormones are being secreted in normal amounts. During the test, one or more medicines will be administered – some in pill form (which can usually be dissolved, if necessary), some by injection, or by intravenous (IV) needle. At various time intervals, samples of blood will be taken so the doctor can measure how the pituitary gland is responding. Often, a small needle is inserted into a vein (also called a ‘port’) for the duration of the test so that several blood samples can be taken with only one needle insertion. Throughout the test, the patient will be kept comfortable in a recliner, on a hospital bed, or on an exam table. Total testing time may take several hours.

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