

**For the Patient: Flutamide**

Other names: APO-FLUTAMIDE®, EUFLEX®,
NOVO-FLUTAMIDE®

BC Cancer Agency

- **Flutamide** (floo' ta mide) is a drug that is used to treat prostate cancer. It blocks the effect of testosterone which is a male sex hormone that may stimulate the growth of prostate cancer. Flutamide is often used with another drug that lowers testosterone levels. It is a tablet that you take by mouth. The tablet contains lactose.
- It is important to **take** flutamide exactly as directed by your doctor. Make sure you understand the directions.
- You may **take** flutamide with food or on an empty stomach.
- If you **miss a dose** of flutamide, take it as soon as you can if it is within 4 hours of the missed dose. If it is over 4 hours since your missed dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your usual dosing times.
- Other drugs such as warfarin (COUMADIN®) may **interact** with flutamide. Tell your doctor if you are taking this or any other drugs as you may need extra blood tests or your dose may need to be changed. Check with your doctor or pharmacist before you start or stop taking any other drugs.
- **Avoid grapefruit and grapefruit juice** for the duration of your treatment, as these may interact with flutamide.
- The **drinking of alcohol** (in small amounts) does not appear to affect the safety or usefulness of flutamide.
- Flutamide may **lower sperm counts** after you have taken it for a long time. If you plan to have children, discuss this with your doctor before taking flutamide.
- **Store** flutamide tablets out of the reach of children, at room temperature, away from heat, light, and moisture.
- **Tell** doctors or dentists that you are being treated with flutamide before you receive any treatment from them.

Side effects are listed in the following table in the order in which they may occur. Tips to help manage the side effects are included.

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
Nausea does not usually occur with flutamide.	
Your urine may be amber or yellow-green in colour.	Your urine will return to its normal colour when you stop taking flutamide.
Diarrhea may sometimes occur.	<p>If diarrhea is a problem:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drink plenty of fluids. • Eat and drink often in small amounts. • Avoid high fibre foods as outlined in <i>Food Ideas to Help with Diarrhea During Chemotherapy</i>.* • Note: If lactose in milk usually gives you diarrhea, the lactose in the tablet may be causing your diarrhea. Take LACTAID® tablets just before your flutamide dose.
<p>Hot flashes (sudden sweating and feelings of warmth) are common when you first start taking flutamide. This usually improves as your body adjusts to flutamide.</p> <p>Hot flashes are more common when flutamide is taken with another drug that lowers testosterone levels.</p>	<p>If hot flashes are troublesome:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some people find it helpful to avoid alcohol, spicy food, and caffeine (coffee, tea, colas, chocolate). • Follow a regular exercise program. • Try staying in a cool environment. • Wear layers so that if you do experience a hot flash, the outer layers may be removed. • Ask your doctor for more advice if your hot flashes continue to bother you. There may be medications available.
Breast swelling, soreness and/or leaking from the nipple may rarely occur.	This will return to normal when you stop taking flutamide.
Your skin may sunburn more easily than usual.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid direct sunlight and tanning salons. • Wear a hat, long sleeves, and long pants or skirt outside on sunny days. • Wear a sunscreen that blocks both UVA and UVB and has a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 30. Apply liberally, 30 minutes before exposure. Reapply every 2 hours and after swimming. • Consult the <i>BC Health Guide</i> or your community pharmacist for more information.

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
Tiredness and lack of energy may sometimes occur.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not drive a car or operate machinery if you are feeling tired. Try the ideas in <i>Your Bank of Energy Savings: How People with Cancer Can Handle Fatigue</i>.*
Impotence (loss of sexual ability) and/or a change in sexual desire may commonly occur.	This will return to normal when you stop taking flutamide.
Hair loss does not occur with flutamide.	

***Please ask your chemotherapy nurse or pharmacist for a copy.**

STOP TAKING FLUTAMIDE AND SEE YOUR DOCTOR OR GET EMERGENCY HELP IMMEDIATELY IF YOU HAVE:

- Signs of **liver problems** such as yellow eyes or skin, white or clay-coloured stools.
- Signs of **lung problems** such as cough, shortness of breath or difficulty in breathing.

SEE YOUR DOCTOR AS SOON AS POSSIBLE (DURING OFFICE HOURS) IF YOU HAVE:

- Signs of **anemia** such as unusual tiredness or weakness.

CHECK WITH YOUR DOCTOR IF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING CONTINUE OR BOTHER YOU:

- Hot flashes.
- Decreased sexual desire or ability.
- Excessive breast swelling, soreness, or discharge.
- Uncontrolled nausea, vomiting, indigestion, diarrhea, or constipation.
- Headache not controlled with acetaminophen (TYLENOL®).
- Skin rash or itching.
- Weight gain.
- Swelling of hands, feet, or lower legs.
- Changes in eyesight.
- Dizziness, drowsiness, trouble sleeping, or mood changes.

REPORT ADDITIONAL PROBLEMS TO YOUR DOCTOR
