



For the Patient: Fulvestrant
Other names: FASLODEX®

BC Cancer Agency

- **Fulvestrant** (ful ves' trant) is a drug that is used to treat breast cancer. Some cancers are hormone sensitive (estrogen or progesterone receptor positive) and their growth can be affected by blocking the effect of the hormone estrogen. Fulvestrant blocks the effect of estrogen produced by your body and decreases the growth of hormone sensitive tumours. It is a clear liquid that is injected into a muscle.
- Tell your doctor if you have ever had an unusual or **allergic reaction** to fulvestrant before receiving fulvestrant.
- It is important to **use** fulvestrant exactly as directed by your doctor. Try to adhere to the schedule recommended by your doctor. If your scheduled dose is changed by a few days, the medication will still be effective.
- Other drugs may **interact** with fulvestrant. Check with your doctor or pharmacist before you start or stop taking any other drugs.
- Because fulvestrant works by blocking the effects of estrogen in your body, it is recommended that you **avoid using estrogen therapy** such as conjugated estrogens (PREMARIN®, C.E.S.®, ESTRACE®, ESTRACOMB®, ESTRADERM®, or ESTRING®) or birth control pills.
- The **drinking of alcohol** (in small amounts) does not appear to affect the safety or usefulness of fulvestrant.
- Fulvestrant may harm the baby if used during pregnancy. It is best to use **a method of birth control** while being treated with fulvestrant. Tell your doctor right away if you become pregnant. **Do not use birth control pills.** Do not breast feed during treatment.
- **Store** the injection in the original packaging, out of the reach of children, in the fridge. Fulvestrant may be removed from the fridge and stored at room temperature for up to 1 hour before injection.
- **Tell** doctors, dentists, and other health professionals that you are being treated with fulvestrant 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
<p>Hot flashes (sudden sweating and feelings of warmth) may sometimes occur when you first start taking fulvestrant. This usually improves as your body adjusts to fulvestrant.</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.
<p>Allergic reactions may rarely occur. Signs of an allergic reaction may include flushing, rash, itching, dizziness, swelling, or breathing problems.</p> <p>This can occur immediately or several hours after receiving fulvestrant and usually only with the first or second dose.</p>	<p>Tell your nurse if this happens while you are receiving fulvestrant or contact your oncologist immediately if this happens after you leave the clinic.</p>
<p>Pain or tenderness may occur where the needle was placed.</p>	<p>Apply cool compresses or soak in cool water for 15-20 minutes several times a day.</p>
<p>Nausea and vomiting may sometimes occur when you first receive fulvestrant. This should improve as your body adjusts to fulvestrant. Most people have little or no nausea.</p>	<p>If nausea and vomiting are a problem:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drink plenty of fluids. • Eat and drink often in small amounts. • Try the ideas in <i>Food Choices to Help Control Nausea</i>.*
<p>Diarrhea may rarely occur.</p>	<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>.*
<p>Constipation may rarely occur.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise if you can. • Drink plenty of fluids. • Try ideas in <i>Suggestions for Dealing with Constipation</i>.*
<p>Tiredness and lack of energy may sometimes occur.</p>	<p>This is usually mild. If it persists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try the ideas in <i>Your Bank of Energy Savings: How People with Cancer Can Handle Fatigue</i>.*

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
Headache may rarely occur.	Take acetaminophen (e.g., TYLENOL®) every 4-6 hours if needed, to a maximum of 4 g (4000 mg) per day.
Muscle or bone pain may sometimes occur.	You may take acetaminophen (e.g., TYLENOL®) every 4-6 hours to a maximum of 4 g (4000 mg) per day or ibuprofen (e.g., ADVIL®) for mild to moderate pain. Tell your doctor if the pain interferes with your activity.
Menstrual-type bleeding may rarely occur when you start taking fulvestrant.	This is a normal and expected reaction. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact your doctor if the bleeding is persistent or heavy.
Hair loss does not occur with fulvestrant.	

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

SEE YOUR DOCTOR OR GET EMERGENCY HELP IMMEDIATELY IF YOU HAVE:

- Signs of an **allergic reaction** (rare) soon after a treatment including dizziness, fast heart beat, face swelling, or breathing problems.
- Signs of a **stroke** such as sudden onset of severe headache, eyesight changes, slurred speech, loss of coordination, weakness or numbness in arm or leg.
- Signs of a **blood clot** such as tenderness or hardness over a vein, calf swelling and tenderness, sudden onset of cough, chest pain, or shortness of breath.
- Signs of **lung problems** such as shortness of breath or difficulty in breathing, increased cough, swelling of ankles, or fainting.

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

- Signs of **anemia** such as unusual tiredness or weakness.
- Signs of **liver problems** such as yellow eyes or skin, white or clay-coloured stools.
- **Numbness or tingling** in feet or hands.
- Signs of **bladder problems** such as changes in urination, painful burning sensation, presence of blood, or abdominal pain.

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

- Uncontrolled nausea, vomiting, weight loss, diarrhea, or constipation.
- Headache or pain not controlled with acetaminophen (e.g., TYLENOL®).
- Skin rash or itching.
- Consistent or heavy menstrual-type bleeding.
- Dizziness, drowsiness, trouble sleeping, or mood changes.

