



Provincial Health Services Authority

**For the Patient: Fulvestrant**  
Other names: FASLODEX®

- **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 the buttock 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 replacement therapy** (such as PREMARIN®, C.E.S.®, ESTRACE®, ESTRADERM®, or ESTRING®) or birth control pills unless directed otherwise by your doctor.
- The **drinking of alcohol** (in small amounts) does not appear to affect the safety or usefulness of fulvestrant.
- Fulvestrant may affect **fertility** in men and women. If you plan to have children, discuss this with your doctor before being treated with fulvestrant.
- Fulvestrant may damage sperm and may harm the baby if used during pregnancy. It is best to use **a non-hormonal method of birth control** while being treated with fulvestrant. Talk to your doctor about which birth control options are best for you. Tell your doctor right away if you or your partner becomes pregnant. Do not breastfeed during treatment.
- **Store** fulvestrant injection in the fridge, in the original packaging, and out of the reach of children. 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><b>Allergic reactions</b> may sometimes occur. Signs of an allergic reaction may include rash, itching, swelling, or breathing problems.</p> <p>This can occur immediately or several days after receiving fulvestrant.</p>	<p>Tell your nurse if this happens while you are receiving fulvestrant or contact your oncologist <b>immediately</b> if this happens after you leave the clinic.</p>
<p><b>Pain or tenderness</b> 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><b>Hot flashes</b> (sudden sweating and feelings of warmth) 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"> <li>• Some people find it helpful to avoid alcohol, spicy food, and caffeine (coffee, tea, colas, chocolate).</li> <li>• Follow a regular exercise program.</li> <li>• Try staying in a cool environment.</li> <li>• Wear layers so that if you do experience a hot flash, the outer layers may be removed.</li> <li>• Ask your doctor for more advice if your hot flashes continue to bother you. There may be medications available.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Nausea and vomiting</b> may 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"> <li>• Drink plenty of fluids.</li> <li>• Eat and drink often in small amounts.</li> </ul> <p>Try the ideas in <i>Practical Tips to Manage Nausea</i>.*</p>
<p><b>Diarrhea</b> may sometimes occur.</p>	<p>If diarrhea is a problem:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drink plenty of fluids.</li> <li>• Eat and drink often in small amounts.</li> <li>• Avoid high fibre foods as outlined in <i>Food Choices to Help Manage Diarrhea</i>.*</li> </ul>
<p><b>Constipation</b> may sometimes occur.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exercise if you can.</li> <li>• Drink plenty of fluids.</li> <li>• Try ideas in <i>Food Choices to Manage Constipation</i>.*</li> </ul>

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
<b>Headache</b> may sometimes occur.	Take acetaminophen (e.g., TYLENOL®) every 4-6 hours if needed, to a maximum of 4 g (4000 mg) per day.
<b>Loss of appetite</b> and <b>weight loss</b> sometimes occur.	Try the ideas in <i>Food Ideas to Help with Decreased Appetite</i> .*
<b>Muscle, joint or bone pain</b> 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.
<b>Tiredness</b> and lack of energy may sometimes occur.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not drive a car or operate machinery if you are feeling tired.</li> <li>• Try the ideas in <i>Fatigue/Tiredness – Patient Handout</i> or <i>Your Bank to Energy Savings: Helping People with Cancer Handle Fatigue</i>.*</li> </ul>
<b>Menstrual-type bleeding</b> may rarely occur within the first six weeks of starting fulvestrant.	<p>This is a normal and expected reaction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact your doctor if the bleeding is persistent or heavy.</li> </ul>
<b>Hair loss</b> is rare with fulvestrant. If you lose hair, it will grow back once you stop treatment with fulvestrant. Colour and texture may change.	If hair loss is a problem, refer to <i>Resources for Hair Loss and Appearance Changes – Patient Handout</i> .*

**\*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 rash, itching, 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 **heart or lung problems** such as fast or uneven heartbeat, chest pain, chest pressure, shortness of breath or difficulty in breathing, swelling of feet or lower legs, 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 legs, feet or hands.
- Signs of **bladder problems** such as changes in urination, painful burning sensation, or presence of blood.

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

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

**REPORT ADDITIONAL PROBLEMS TO YOUR DOCTOR**

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