



Provincial Health Services Authority

**For the Patient: Bicalutamide**

Other names: CASODEX®

- **Bicalutamide** (bye ka loo' 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. Bicalutamide is often used with another drug that lowers testosterone levels. It is a tablet that you take by mouth. The tablet contains lactose.
- Tell your doctor if you have ever had an unusual or **allergic reaction** to bicalutamide before taking bicalutamide.
- It is important to **take** bicalutamide exactly as directed by your doctor. Make sure you understand the directions.
- You may **take** bicalutamide with food or on an empty stomach.
- If you **miss a dose** of bicalutamide, skip the missed dose and go back to your usual dosing times. Do NOT take a double dose to make up for the missed dose.
- Other drugs such as warfarin (COUMADIN®) may **interact** with bicalutamide. 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.
- The **drinking of alcohol** (in small amounts) does not appear to affect the safety or usefulness of bicalutamide.
- Bicalutamide may affect **fertility** in men. If you plan to have children, discuss this with your doctor before being treated with bicalutamide.
- Bicalutamide may damage sperm and may harm the baby if used during pregnancy. It is best for male patients to use **birth control** during sexual activity with a pregnant woman or a woman who might become pregnant while being treated with bicalutamide and for at least 4 months after the last dose. Tell your doctor right away if your partner becomes pregnant.
- **Store** bicalutamide tablets out of the reach of children, at room temperature, away from heat, light, and moisture.
- **Tell** doctors, dentists, and other health professionals that you are being treated with bicalutamide 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>Nausea</b> does not usually occur with bicalutamide.</p>	
<p><b>Hot flashes</b> (sudden sweating and feelings of warmth) sometimes occur when you first start taking bicalutamide. This usually improves as your body adjusts to bicalutamide.</p>	<p>If hot flashes are troublesome:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take your bicalutamide at bedtime.</li> <li>• If night sweats interfere with sleep, try taking bicalutamide in the morning.</li> <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> </ul> <p>Ask your doctor for more advice if your hot flashes continue to bother you. There may be medications available.</p>
<p><b>Breast swelling</b> and soreness may sometimes occur, especially when bicalutamide is used alone. Breast swelling or soreness is rare when bicalutamide is taken with another drug that lowers testosterone levels.</p>	<p>This will return to normal when you stop taking bicalutamide.</p>
<p><b>Impotence</b> (loss of sexual ability) may occur, especially when bicalutamide is used alone.</p>	<p>This will return to normal when you stop taking bicalutamide.</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> <li>• <b>Note:</b> If lactose in milk usually gives you diarrhea, the lactose in the tablet may be causing your diarrhea. Take LACTAID® tablets just before your bicalutamide dose.</li> </ul>

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
<b>Constipation</b> may sometimes occur.	<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>
<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>.*</li> </ul>
<b>Headache, muscle or joint pain</b> may rarely occur.	Take acetaminophen (e.g., TYLENOL®) every 4-6 hours if needed, to a maximum of 4 g (4000 mg) per day.
<b>Sugar control</b> may sometimes be affected in patients with diabetes.	Check your blood sugar regularly if you are diabetic.
<b>Swelling</b> of hands, feet, or lower legs may sometimes occur if your body retains extra fluid.	<p>If swelling is a problem:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elevate your feet when sitting.</li> <li>• Avoid tight clothing.</li> </ul>
<b>Hair loss</b> is rare with bicalutamide. If you lose hair, it will grow back once you stop treatment with bicalutamide. 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 nurse or pharmacist for a copy.

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

- Signs of an **allergic reaction** (rare) including dizziness, fast heartbeat, face swelling, or breathing problems.
- 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.
- Signs of **kidney problems** such as lower back or side pain, swelling of feet or lower legs.
- Signs of **bladder problems** such as changes in urination, painful burning feeling when urinating, presence of blood, or abdominal pain.

