



**For the Patient:** Leuprolide injection  
Other names: ELIGARD®, LUPRON®, LUPRON  
DEPOT®

**BC Cancer Agency**

- **Leuprolide** (loo' proe lide) is a drug that is used to treat prostate cancer, breast cancer, and other cancers. In men, leuprolide decreases testosterone (a male sex hormone). In women, leuprolide decreases estrogen and progesterone (female sex hormones). Leuprolide may be a liquid that is injected under the skin or tiny particles injected into a muscle.
- Tell your doctor if you have ever had an unusual or **allergic reaction** to leuprolide, buserelin, or goserelin, before taking leuprolide.
- It is important to **use** leuprolide 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 leuprolide. Check with your doctor or pharmacist before you start taking any new drugs.
- The **drinking of alcohol** (in small amounts) does not appear to affect the safety or usefulness of leuprolide.
- Leuprolide may cause **sterility** in men and **menopause** in women. If you plan to have children, discuss this with your doctor before being treated with leuprolide.
- Leuprolide may damage sperm and may harm the baby if used during pregnancy. It is best to use **birth control** while being treated with leuprolide. Tell your doctor right away if you or your partner becomes pregnant. Do not breast feed during treatment.
- **Store** the injection in the original packaging, out of the reach of children. Store LUPRON® at room temperature, and away from heat, light, and moisture. Store ELIGARD® in fridge.
- **Tell** doctors or dentists that you are being treated with leuprolide 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
<b>Pain or tenderness</b> may occur where the needle was placed.	Apply cool compresses or soak in cool water for 15-20 minutes several times a day.
<b>Nausea</b> does not usually occur with leuprolide.	
<b>Increased bone pain</b> may occur for the first 1-2 weeks if your cancer has spread to your bones.	This should improve as your body adjusts to leuprolide. You may take acetaminophen (e.g., TYLENOL®) or ibuprofen (e.g., ADVIL®) for mild to moderate pain. Tell your doctor if the pain interferes with your activity.
<b>Hot flashes</b> (sudden sweating and feelings of warmth) may commonly occur.	<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>
<b>Tiredness</b> and lack of energy may 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>Your Bank of Energy Savings: How People with Cancer Can Handle Fatigue</i>.*</li> </ul>
<b>Impotence</b> (loss of sexual ability) may commonly occur.	Sexual ability may return when you stop taking leuprolide.
<b>Decreased libido</b> (loss of sexual desire) may commonly occur.	Sexual desire may return when you stop taking leuprolide.
<b>Headache</b> may occur.	Take acetaminophen (e.g., TYLENOL®) every 4-6 hours if needed, to a maximum of 4 g (4000 mg) per day.
<b>Weight changes</b> may occur. A small amount of weight gain may occur.	<p>To maintain your weight:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep active.</li> <li>• Modify your diet as necessary.</li> </ul>

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
<b>Sugar control</b> may be affected in diabetics. Some people may be at risk for developing problems with blood sugar over time.	Check your blood sugar regularly if you are diabetic. Talk to your doctor if you feel an unusual degree of thirst and experience frequent urination, as these can be signs of high blood sugar.
<b>Hair loss is rare</b> with leuprolide. If you lose hair, it will usually grow back once you stop treatment with leuprolide. Colour and texture may change.	If hair loss is a problem: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use a gentle shampoo and soft brush.</li> <li>• Care should be taken with use of hair spray, bleaches, dyes, and perms.</li> </ul>
<b>Increase in cholesterol or triglycerides</b> may rarely occur.	Discuss this with your doctor if you have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A history of heart disease, high blood pressure, or elevated triglycerides.</li> <li>• You may need to have your cholesterol and triglyceride levels checked a few months after starting leuprolide.</li> </ul>
<b>Bone loss</b> happens gradually and normally with age, but may happen more quickly with this medication. Over time, your risk of breaking a bone may be higher.	Refer to <i>Patient Guidelines for the Prevention of Osteoporosis in Women</i> * or <i>Guidelines for the Prevention of Osteoporosis for Men with Prostate Cancer on Hormone Therapy</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 dizziness, fast heart beat, 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 ankles, or fainting.
- For men: **Signs of an increase** in the size of the cancer in your prostate such as blood in urine, problems passing urine, sudden back or trunk pain, or weakness in your legs, especially during the first month of the treatment. This is also called a flare reaction.

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

- **Changes in eyesight.**
- Ringing in your ears or **hearing problems.**
- For women: Ongoing **menstrual flow** that occurs **after** three to four months of treatment.

