

**For the Patient: Megestrol**

Other names: APO-MEGESTROL®, MEGACE®,
NU-MEGESTROL®

BC Cancer Agency

- **Megestrol** (me jes' trol) is a drug that is used to treat many types of cancer. Megestrol is similar to the hormone progesterone. It is a tablet that you take by mouth.
- It is important to **take** megestrol exactly as directed by your doctor. Make sure you understand the directions. You may take megestrol **with food or on an empty stomach**.
- *For once daily dosing:* If you **miss a dose** of megestrol, take it as soon as you can if it is within 12 hours of the missed dose. If it is over 12 hours since your missed dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your usual dosing times.
- *For four times a day dosing:* If you **miss a dose** of megestrol, skip the missed dose and go back to your usual dosing times.
- Other drugs may **interact** with megestrol. 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 megestrol.
- It is not known if megestrol affects **fertility** in men and women. If you plan to have children, discuss this with your doctor before being treated with megestrol.
- Megestrol may harm the baby if used during pregnancy. It is best to use **birth control** while being treated with megestrol. **Do not use birth control pills**. Tell your doctor right away if you or your partner becomes pregnant. Do not breast feed during treatment.
- **Tell** doctors, dentists, and other health professionals that you are being treated with megestrol before you receive any treatment from them.
- **Store** megestrol tablets out of the reach of children, at room temperature, away from heat, light, and moisture.
- Megestrol is **usually well tolerated** and serious side effects are rare.

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>Nausea may sometimes occur when you first start taking megestrol. This should improve as your body adjusts to the megestrol. Most people have little or no nausea.</p>	<p>If nausea is a problem:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take your megestrol after eating. • Try the ideas in <i>Food Choices to Control Nausea</i>.*
<p>Megestrol may rarely increase blood sugar.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Check your blood sugar regularly if you are diabetic.
<p>Swelling of hands, feet, or lower legs may rarely occur if your body retains extra fluid.</p>	<p>If swelling is a problem:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elevate your feet when sitting. • Avoid tight clothing.
<p>Increased appetite and weight gain may sometimes occur.</p>	<p>Your appetite will return to normal when you stop taking megestrol.</p>
<p>Hair loss is rare with megestrol. If you lose hair, it will grow back once you stop treatment with megestrol. Colour and texture may change.</p>	<p>If hair loss is a problem, refer to <i>For the Patient: Hair loss due to chemotherapy</i>.*</p>
<p>Blood clots may rarely occur. This is more likely to happen if you have had blood clots before. Signs to watch for include tenderness or hardness over a vein, calf tenderness, sudden onset of cough, chest pain, or shortness of breath.</p>	<p>To help prevent blood clots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep active. • Drink plenty of fluids. • Avoid tight clothing. • Do not sit with your legs crossed at the knees.
<p>For women: menstrual-type bleeding may rarely occur when you stop taking megestrol. Bleeding between menstrual periods may also occur.</p>	<p>This is a normal and expected reaction. Contact your doctor if the bleeding is persistent or heavy.</p>

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

