

**For the Patient: Octreotide**

Other names: SANDOSTATIN®, SANDOSTATIN LAR®

BC Cancer Agency

- **Octreotide** (ok-TREE-oh-tide) is a hormone drug that is used to treat some kinds of cancer. It is a clear liquid that is usually injected under the skin (daily injection) or into a muscle (monthly injection). You may be started on daily injections to see how you react, before switching to monthly injections. Depending on the problem being treated, you may need to continue the daily injections for a couple of weeks after the first monthly injection.
- A **blood test** may be taken from time to time. The dose and timing of your octreotide may be changed based on the test results and/or other side effects.
- Tell your doctor if you have **gallstones** now, or have had them in the past, as you may develop gallstones when you are using octreotide.
- **Store** octreotide out of the reach of children, in the refrigerator (do not freeze), and protected from light. Daily injections can be kept at room temperature for up to two weeks. Monthly injections can be kept at room temperature on the day of the injection but should only be mixed immediately before injection.
- **Use** octreotide exactly as directed by your doctor. Make sure you understand the directions and feel comfortable with the injections.
 - Use a different site for each injection. Daily injections are injected under the skin and monthly injections are injected into a muscle. Check with your nurse or doctor to find out which sites on your body can be used for injections.
 - For daily injections: time the injections between meals or at bedtime to avoid stomach upset and abdominal discomfort.
 - Take the ampules or vials out of the refrigerator and allow them to warm to room temperature (eg, 30-60 minutes) before injection. Do not heat the ampules or vials.
 - Use each syringe only once to avoid infection. Place used syringes in a rigid plastic container with a lid. Discard container as instructed by your treatment centre. Keep out of reach of children.
- For **daily** injections: if you **miss a dose**, inject it as soon as you can. If it is less than 2 hours until your next dose, skip the next dose and then go back to your usual dosing times. Your symptoms may reappear until you are back on schedule.
- For **monthly** injections: if you **miss a dose**, arrange for it to be injected as soon as possible. It will not do any harm if a dose is a few days late, but your symptoms may reappear until you are back on schedule.

- Other drugs such as bromocriptine (eg, PARLODEL®), cimetidine (eg, TAGAMET®) cyclosporine (NEORAL®), insulin, and some heart medications (eg, beta blockers) may ***interact*** with octreotide. Tell your doctor if you are taking these or any other drugs as you may need extra blood tests or your dose may need to be changed. If you are diabetic, your doctor may need to adjust your antidiabetic treatment. 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 octreotide.
- The effect of octreotide on fertility and pregnancy is not known. It is best to use ***birth control*** while being treated with octreotide. Tell your doctor right away if you or your partner becomes pregnant. Do not breast feed during treatment.
- ***Tell*** doctors or dentists that you are being treated with octreotide 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>Stinging, tingling or burning at the injection site sometimes occurs and rarely lasts more than 15-60 minutes. Pain or tenderness may occur where the needle was placed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take the solution out of the refrigerator and allow it to warm to room temperature (eg, 30-60 minutes) before injection. Do not heat the solution as this may destroy the octreotide. • After injection, rub the spot gently. • If pain or tenderness continues, apply cool compresses or soak in cool water for 15-20 minutes several times a day.
<p>Nausea may occur after your treatment. Most people have little or no nausea. Nausea usually stops 2-3 weeks after you start using octreotide as your body adjusts to the drug.</p>	<p>To help nausea:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time the daily injections of regular octreotide between meals or at bedtime. • Drink plenty of liquids. • Eat and drink often in small amounts. • Try the ideas in <i>Food Choices to Control Nausea</i>.
<p>Octreotide is used to reduce or prevent diarrhea in some types of cancer. Diarrhea may occur in patients treated for other types of cancer. With the monthly injection, diarrhea is usually mild and often disappears within 1-4 days of the injection.</p>	<p>To help diarrhea:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time daily injections of regular octreotide between meals or at bedtime. • Drink plenty of liquids. • Eat and drink often in small amounts. • Avoid high fibre foods as outlined in <i>Coping with Diarrhea</i>

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
Abdominal discomfort may occur.	To help abdominal discomfort: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time daily injections of regular octreotide between meals or at bedtime. • Abdominal discomfort with the monthly injection is usually mild and often disappears within 1-4 days of the injection.
Headache may occur.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take acetaminophen (eg, TYLENOL®) to decrease or stop headache.
Sugar control may be affected in diabetics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check your blood sugar regularly if you are diabetic.
Dizziness sometimes occurs when you first start using octreotide.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This usually improves as your body adjusts to octreotide.
Tiredness and lack of energy may occur.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not drive a car or operate machinery if you are feeling tired. • Try the ideas in <i>Your bank of energy savings: How people with cancer can handle fatigue</i>.
Hair loss is rare with octreotide. Your hair will grow back once you stop treatment with octreotide. Colour and texture may change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a gentle shampoo and soft brush. • Care should be taken with use of hair spray, bleaches, dyes and perms.

STOP USING OCTREOTIDE AND 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 problems** such as fast, slow or uneven heartbeat.

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

- Signs of **gallstones** such as stomach pain or abdominal discomfort, fever, nausea and vomiting
- Signs of **high blood sugar** such as drowsiness, dry mouth, flushed and dry skin, fruit-like breath odor, increased urination, appetite loss, rapid deep breathing, unusual thirst, rapid weight loss.
- Signs of **low blood sugar** such as anxious feeling, chills, cool and pale skin, difficulty thinking, headache, hunger, shakiness, sweating, fainting, unusual tiredness or weakness.
- Signs of **liver problems** such as yellow eyes or skin, white or clay-coloured stools.

