

## Anastrozole (Arimidex)

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### About This Drug

Anastrozole is used to treat cancer. It is given orally (by mouth).

### Possible Side Effects

- Nausea Swelling of your legs, ankles and/or feet
- Trouble sleeping
- Weakness
- Headache
- Depression
- Inflammation of your throat
- Lymphedema - swelling in your affected arm
- Joint, bone, back, and general pain
- Arthritis
- You may develop osteoporosis (weak and brittle bones)
- Risk of bone fractures (i.e., femoral, hip, vertebral) fractures
- Hot flashes or sudden skin flushing may happen. You may also feel warm or red.
- Cough, trouble breathing
- Rash
- High blood pressure

**Note:** Each of the side effects above was reported in 10% or greater of patients treated with anastrozole. All possible side effects are not included. Your side effects may be different depending on your cancer diagnosis, condition, or if you are receiving other drugs in combination. Please discuss any concerns or questions with your medical team.

### Warnings and Precautions

- If you have a history of severe heart disease, this drug may increase your risk of a heart attack.
- Decrease in your bone mass, which may put you at risk of bone fractures, especially of your spine, hip and wrist. Your doctor may monitor your bone mineral density.
- Your cholesterol level may increase.
- Allergic reactions, including anaphylaxis are rare but may happen in some patients. Signs of allergic reaction to this drug may be swelling of the face, feeling like your tongue or throat are swelling,

trouble breathing, rash, itching, fever, chills, feeling dizzy, and/or feeling that your heart is beating in a fast or not normal way. **If this happens, do not take another dose of this drug. You should get urgent medical treatment.**

- Skin reactions such as rash, ulcers, or lesions/blisters
- Changes in your liver function

## How to Take Your Medication

- Swallow the medicine with or without food.
- **Missed dose:** If you miss a dose, take it as soon as you think about it. If it is close to your next dose, then skip the missed dose and go back to your normal schedule. Do not take 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.
- **Handling:** Wash your hands after handling your medicine, your caretakers should not handle your medicine with bare hands and should wear latex gloves.
- **Storage:** Store this medicine in the original container at room temperature.
- **Disposal of unused medicine:** Do not flush any expired and/or unused medicine down the toilet or drain unless you are specifically instructed to do so on the medication label. Some facilities have take-back programs and/or other options. If you do not have a take-back program in your area, then please discuss with your nurse or your doctor how to dispose of unused medicine.

## Treating Side Effects

- Drink plenty of fluids (a minimum of eight glasses per day is recommended).
- If you throw up, you should drink more fluids so that you do not become dehydrated (lack of water in the body from losing too much fluid).
- To help with nausea, eat small, frequent meals instead of three large meals a day. Choose foods and drinks that are at room temperature. Ask your nurse or doctor about other helpful tips and medicine that is available to help lessen or stop these symptoms.
- Keeping your pain under control is important to your well-being. Please tell your doctor or nurse if you are experiencing pain.
- If you get a rash do not put anything on it unless your doctor or nurse says you may. Keep the area around the rash clean and dry. Ask your doctor for medicine if your rash bothers you.

## Food and Drug Interactions

- There are no known interactions of anastrozole with food.
- Check with your doctor or pharmacist about all other prescription medicines and over-the-counter medicines and dietary supplements (vitamins, minerals, herbs, and others) you are taking before starting this medicine as there are known drug interactions with anastrozole. Also, check with your doctor or pharmacist before starting any new prescription or over-the-counter medicines, or dietary supplements to make sure that there are no interactions.
- Avoid the use of estrogen-containing products while taking anastrozole as this may lower the levels of the drug in your body, which can make it less effective.



## When to Call the Doctor

Call your doctor or nurse if you have any of these symptoms and/or any new or unusual symptoms:

- Fever of 100.4° F (38° C) or higher
- Chills
- Headache that does not go away
- Blurry vision or other changes in eyesight
- Lose interest in your daily activities that you used to enjoy and feeling this way every day, and/or you feel hopelessness
- Tiredness and/or extreme weakness that interferes with your daily activities
- Trouble falling or staying asleep
- Cough that is bothersome
- Wheezing and/or trouble breathing
- Chest pain or symptoms of a heart attack. Most heart attacks involve pain in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes. The pain may go away and come back or it can be constant. It can feel like pressure, squeezing, fullness, or pain. Sometimes pain is felt in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw, or stomach. **If any of these symptoms last 2 minutes, call 911.**
- Nausea that stops you from eating or drinking and/or is not relieved by prescribed medicines
- Weight gain of 5 pounds in one week (fluid retention)
- Swelling of your legs, ankles and/or feet
- New rash, ulcers, lesions/blisters, and/or itching
- Rash that is not relieved by prescribed medicines
- Pain that does not go away, or is not relieved by prescribed medicines
- Signs of carpal tunnel: tickling, tingling or numbness in your hand
- Signs of allergic reaction: swelling of the face, feeling like your tongue or throat are swelling, trouble breathing, rash, itching, fever, chills, feeling dizzy, and/or feeling that your heart is beating in a fast or not normal way. **If this happens, call 911 for emergency care.**
- Signs of possible liver problems: dark urine, pale bowel movements, pain in your abdomen, feeling very tired and weak, unusual itching, or yellowing of the eyes or skin
- If you think you are pregnant

## Reproduction Warnings

- **Pregnancy warning:** This drug can have harmful effects on the unborn baby. Women of childbearing potential should use effective methods of birth control during your cancer treatment and for at least 3 weeks after stopping treatment. Let your doctor know right away if you think you may be pregnant.
- **Breastfeeding warning:** It is not known if this drug passes into breast milk. For this reason, women should not breastfeed during treatment and for at least 2 weeks after stopping treatment because this drug could enter the breast milk and cause harm to a breastfeeding baby.



- **Fertility warning:** In women, this drug may affect your ability to have children in the future. Talk with your doctor or nurse if you plan to have children. Ask for information on egg banking.

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