UPMC | HILLMAN CANCER CENTER

Megestrol acetate

About This Medicine

MEGESTROL (me JES trol) reduces the symptoms of breast or endometrial cancer. It works by decreasing levels of estrogen and other hormones in your body, which may slow or stop cancer cells from spreading or growing. This medication is a progestin hormone. It is given orally (by mouth).

This medicine may be used for other purposes; ask your care team if you have questions.

Possible Side Effects

- Nausea
- Diarrhea (loose bowel movements)
- Weakness
- Excess gas
- Impotence (erectile dysfunction)
- Rash
- High blood pressure

Note: *Each of the side effects above was reported in 5% or greater of people treated with megestrol acetate. 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 medicines in combination. Please discuss any concerns or questions with your care team.*

Warnings and Precautions

- Blood sugar levels may change
- Blood clots and events such as stroke and heart attack, which may be life-threatening. A blood clot in your leg may cause your leg to swell, appear red and warm, and/or cause pain. A blood clot in your lungs may cause trouble breathing, pain when breathing, and/or chest pain.
- Changes in your adrenal gland function and risk of Cushing's Syndrome. Symptoms may be increased fat around the midsection, upper back, neck, or face, pink or purple stretch marks on the skin, thinning, fragile skin that easily bruises, unexpected hair growth

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Note: *Some of the side effects above are very rare. If you have concerns and/or questions, please discuss them with your care team.*

Important Information

- This medicine is available in tablets and oral suspension. Do not use them interchangeably.

How to Take Your Medicine

- **For tablets and oral suspension:** Take the medicine as prescribed by your care team. For oral suspension, shake medicine well before using.
- **Missed dose**: If you vomit or miss a dose, contact your care team for further instructions. Do not take 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.
- **Overdosage**: If you think you have taken too much of this medicine contact a poison control center or emergency room at once.
- **Handling:** Wash your hands with soap and water, before and after handling your medicine. Your caretakers should not handle your medicine with bare hands and should wear latex gloves.
- This medicine may be present in the urine, stool and other body fluids such as blood, vomit, semen, and vaginal fluids. Take precautions to prevent others from coming in contact with your medicine or your body fluids. Follow safety precautions during your treatment and for as long as directed by your care team after your treatment. If you take a pill each day, follow these precautions every day.
- **Storage:** Store this medicine in the original container at room temperature. Protect from heat. Keep out of the reach of children and pets.
- **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 medicine 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 care team how to dispose of unused medicine.

Treating Side Effects

- Drink enough fluids to keep your urine pale yellow.
- If you throw up or have diarrhea, you should drink more fluids so that you do not become dehydrated (lack of water in the body from losing too much fluid). Eat low-fiber foods that are high in protein and calories and avoid foods that can irritate your digestive tracts or lead to cramping.
- Ask your care team about medicine that can lessen or stop your diarrhea.
- To help with nausea and vomiting, eat small, frequent meals instead of three large meals a day. Choose foods and drinks that are at room temperature. Ask your care team about other helpful tips and medicine that is available to help stop or lessen these symptoms.
- Avoid gas-producing foods, such as brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, carrots, prunes and apricots.
- If you have diabetes, keep good control of your blood sugar level. Tell your care team if your glucose levels are higher or lower than normal.
- If you get a rash do not put anything on it unless your care team says you may. Keep the area around the rash clean and dry. Ask your care team for medicine if your rash bothers you.

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- Keeping your pain under control is important to your well-being. Please tell your care team if you are experiencing pain.

Food and Medicine Interactions

- There are no known interactions of megestrol acetate with food.
- Check with your care team 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 medicine interactions with megestrol acetate. Also, check with your care team before starting any new prescription or over-the-counter medicines, or dietary supplements to make sure that there are no interactions.

When to Call Your Care Team

Call your care team if you have any of these symptoms and/or any new or unusual symptoms:

- Headache that does not go away
- Blurry vision or other changes in eyesight
- Tiredness or weakness that interferes with your daily activities
- Feeling dizzy or lightheaded
- Your leg is swollen, red, warm and/or painful
- 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. 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.**
- Symptoms of a stroke such as sudden numbness or weakness of your face, arm, or leg, mostly on one side of your body; sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding; sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes; sudden trouble walking, feeling dizzy, loss of balance or coordination; or sudden, bad headache with no known cause. **If you have any of these symptoms for 2 minutes, call 911.**
- Nausea that stops you from eating or drinking and/or is not relieved by prescribed medicines
- Throwing up more than 3 times a day
- Diarrhea, 4 times in one day or diarrhea with lack of strength or a feeling of being dizzy
- Excessive gas or pain in your abdomen that does not go away
- Signs of low adrenal gland function: nausea, vomiting (throwing up), loss of appetite, tiredness, weakness, feeling dizzy or lightheaded
- Abnormal blood sugar
- Unusual thirst, passing urine often, headache, sweating, shakiness, irritability
- A new rash and/or itching or a rash that is not relieved by prescribed medicines

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- **Pregnancy warning**: This medicine may cause serious birth defects. If you can become pregnant, use birth control while taking this medicine. Tell your care team right away if you think you might be pregnant.
- **Breastfeeding warning**: Talk with your care team about breastfeeding during treatment. You may need to stop breastfeeding.
- **Fertility warning:** This medicine may/can affect your ability to have children in the future. If you plan to have children, talk with your care team.

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