Exemestane and Everolimus

What is Exemestane (ex-e-MES-tane) and how does it work?
Exemestane is a type of oral, targeted cancer therapy called an “aromatase inhibitor”. Another name for this drug is Aromasin™. This drug dissolves in your digestive system and is absorbed into your bloodstream. In women who have gone through menopause, estrogen is produced by fat tissue in the body. Exemestane blocks the production of estrogen from fat tissue. Exemestane is made in a laboratory.

What is Everolimus (e-ver-OH-li-mus) and how does it work?
Everolimus is a type of oral, targeted cancer therapy called an “mTOR inhibitor”. Another name for this drug is Afinitor™. This drug dissolves in your digestive system and is absorbed into your bloodstream. Everolimus helps estrogen blocking therapy (like Exemestane) work against cancer cells for longer periods of time. Everolimus is made in a laboratory.

Why am I getting two drugs for my cancer?
The two drugs work together to stop the growth of cancer cells. This special combination of Exemestane and Everolimus only works when both drugs are given together.

What should I tell my doctor before starting this treatment?
Talk to your doctor about the following:

- If you have ever had chemotherapy and the names of the chemotherapy drugs you were given.
- If you have ever had liver problems.
• If you have a history of high cholesterol or heart disease.
• If you are pregnant or think you may be pregnant. Your doctor will talk with you about birth control while getting chemotherapy.
• If you are breastfeeding.
• If you have been told that you need to start a new medicine.
• The medicines/pills you are taking, including:
  ▸ Medicines prescribed by any of your doctors, including phenytoin (Dilantin).
  ▸ Herbs
  ▸ Vitamins
  ▸ Over-the-counter medicines

How does my doctor decide my treatment dose?
To determine your treatment dose, your doctor will review the following: your medicines, how well your liver is working, and any other health problems you have.

How do I handle, store and dispose of these drugs?

• There are special safe handling instructions for this medicine. Talk to your doctor, pharmacist or nurse about the precautions you need to follow when taking this medicine at home.
• Store these medicines in a closed container at room temperature, away from heat, moisture, and direct light.
• Do not store in your bathroom or in your refrigerator.
• Keep these medicines away from children and do not share it with anyone.
• Everolimus comes from the pharmacy in individually wrapped containers.
• Talk with your pharmacist about how to get rid (dispose) of these medicines safely.

How do I take Exemestane?

• Do not take more tablets than prescribed.
• Take this medicine with food or within 30 minutes after you have eaten.
Swallow the tablet with a full glass of water.
This medicine is taken once a day at the same time every day.
If you miss a dose by more than 6 hours, wait until it is time for your next dose, and skip the missed dose. **Do not** double up on doses.
Talk with your doctor or pharmacist about taking calcium and vitamin D supplements to help strengthen bones.

**How do I take Everolimus?**
- **Do not** crush, break, chew or open the tablet.
- Swallow the tablet whole with a full glass of water at the same time every day, with or without food.
- You may take Everolimus and Exemestane at the same time.
- If you miss a dose by more than 6 hours, wait until it is time for your next dose, and skip the missed dose. **Do not** double up on doses.
- Your doctor may change your dose in the future to find out what works best for you. Taking a lower dose of Everolimus does not mean the medicine will not work.

**What are the side effects of this treatment?**
Every person responds differently to treatment. Some of the more common side effects of this treatment are:
- Mouth pain or open sores on your tongue or in your mouth.
- Fatigue or weakness
- Diarrhea
- Rash
- Infections
- Changes to blood sugar levels
- Lung changes
- Taste changes
- Decreased appetite and weight loss
- Hot flashes

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• Menopause symptoms / vaginal changes
• Headache, joint, or muscle pains
• Decreased bone density (osteoporosis or osteopenia)

When should I call my doctor?
You should call your doctor right away if you have any of the following signs or symptoms:
• Fever of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit (38 degrees Celsius) or higher

A fever can be life-threatening if not treated. Your doctor may ask you to go to the hospital.

• Open sores on your tongue or in your mouth
• Nausea that prevents you from eating or drinking
• Diarrhea (4 or more loose stools in 24 hours) or diarrhea at night
• Shortness of breath or trouble breathing, or cough that bothers you or will not go away

Is there anything else I should know about this treatment?
• Do not eat grapefruit or drink grapefruit juice. This can increase your risk of side effects.
• Do not take St. John’s Wort.
• This treatment may make it harder for your body to fight infections. Wash your hands often and avoid people who are sick.
• This treatment requires special precautions to prevent the medicine from coming into contact (through blood, urine, bowel movements, vomit and vaginal or seminal fluids) with others. Your nurse or pharmacist will give you guidelines to follow while taking Everolimus and for 48 hours after your last dose.
• You should drink 8 to 10 eight-ounce glasses of non-caffeinated fluid each day throughout your treatment. It is important to keep hydrated while you are receiving treatment.
For more information about cancer, chemotherapy, side effects or how to care for yourself during treatment, refer to your *Chemotherapy and You* book, or ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

You may also find it helpful to watch The James Patient Education videos at [http://cancer.osu.edu/patientedvideos](http://cancer.osu.edu/patientedvideos) to help you learn tips for managing treatment side effects.