Fulvestrant

What is Fulvestrant (fool-VES-trant) and how does it work?

Fulvestrant is a cancer medicine known as an “estrogen receptor antagonist”. Another name for this medicine is Faslodex. It is made in a laboratory. This medicine fights cancer by keeping the hormone estrogen from “feeding” cancer cells, which stops the cancer cells from growing. This type of treatment is different from chemotherapy and is also known as “endocrine” or “hormone blocking therapy”.

What should I tell my doctor before starting this treatment?

Talk to your doctor about the following:

- If you have ever had liver problems.
- If you are pregnant or think you may be pregnant. Your doctor will talk with you about birth control while getting treatment.
- 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 ordered by any of your doctors
  - Herbs
  - Vitamins
  - Over-the-counter medicines

How does my doctor decide my treatment dose?

The dose of Fulvestrant (500 mg) is often the same for all patients regardless of their height, weight, kidney function or other medicines they take.

During the first month of treatment, this medicine is given one time, every 2 weeks. After the first month of treatment, this medicine will be given 1 time each month. You will see your doctor or nurse practitioner every 1 to 2 months during treatment.
How will my treatment be given?
Fulvestrant comes in a 250 mg syringe and is very thick and oily. The total dose you will be given is 500 mg. You will be given 2 injections into your buttock muscle (bottom). You can have 1 injection at a time, or have both injections given at the same time, one injection on each side of your bottom. Your entire visit, including your doctor’s appointment and your treatment will take 1 to 2 hours.

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:

- Stomach pain
- Constipation or diarrhea
- Nausea or vomiting
- Back pain
- Headache
- Sore throat or cough
- Pain or soreness at the injection site
- Hot flashes or flushing

When should I call my doctor?
You should call your doctor right away if you have any of the following signs or symptoms:

- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Swelling of your face, lips or throat
- Severe pain, blistering, redness or swelling at the injection site
- Depressed mood or sadness

For more information about cancer, cancer treatment, 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 to help you learn tips for managing treatment side effects.