Fulvestrant

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

Fulvestrant is a cancer drug known as an “estrogen receptor antagonist”. Another name for this drug is Faslodex™. This medicine is made in a laboratory. This drug 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 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 prescribed 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 the same for all patients regardless of their height, weight, other medicines, liver or kidney function.

This drug is given every 2 weeks for the first month, then once a month after the first month. You will see the doctor or nurse practitioner about once every 1 to 2 months when you are getting this treatment.

This handout is for informational purposes only. Talk with your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.

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 the buttock muscle. You can have one injection at a time, or you can have two nurses give both of the injections at the same time, one on each side. Your entire visit, including your doctor’s appointment and your treatment will take between 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 place where the injection was given
- 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 the face, lips or throat
- Severe pain, blistering, redness or swelling at the injection site
- Depressed mood or sadness

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.