

Fulvestrant and Palbociclib

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 blocking the hormone estrogen from “feeding” cancer cells which stops the cancer cells from growing. This type of therapy is also known as “endocrine” or “hormone blocking therapy”, this is different from “chemotherapy”.

What is Palbociclib (PALB-o-si-club) and how does it work?

Palbociclib is a type of oral, targeted cancer therapy called a “cyclin D kinase inhibitor.” Another name for this drug is Ibrance™. This drug dissolves in your digestive system and is absorbed into your blood stream. Palbociclib works by stopping the growth cycle of the cancer cell, making it lose the ability to divide and spread. Palbociclib is made in a laboratory.

How do I handle, store and dispose of Palbociclib?

- There are special safe handling instructions for Palbociclib. Talk to your doctor, pharmacist or nurse about the precautions you need to follow when taking this medicine at home.
- Store this medicine 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 this medicine away from children and do not share it with anyone.
- Talk with your doctor or pharmacist about how to get rid of prescription medicines safely.

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

How does my doctor decide my treatment dose?

The dose of **Fulvestrant** (500 mg) is the same for all patients. This drug is given every 2 weeks for the first month, then once a month after the first month.

To determine your **Palbociclib** treatment dose, your doctor will review the following: your white blood cell counts, your medicines, how well your liver and kidneys are working, and any other health problems you have.

You will see the doctor or nurse practitioner every 1 to 3 months when you are getting this treatment.

How will my Fulvestrant 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 shots in your buttock muscle. You can have one injection at a time, or you can have two nurses give the injections one on each side, at the same time. Your entire visit, including your doctor's appointment and your treatment will take about 2 hours.

How do I take Palbociclib?

- **Do not** crush, break, chew or open the tablet.
- Your dose of Ibrance is _____ mg. Take 1 capsule **each day** for 3 weeks, then do not take any Ibrance for 1 week. One "cycle" is 4 weeks.
- Take this medicine **one time a day** (on Days 1 through 21) as close to the same time each day.
- Swallow the capsule whole with a **full glass of water, with food**.
- 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.**
- Do not take another dose if you vomit.

Your doctor may change your dose in the future to find out what works best for you. Taking a lower dose of Ibrance does not mean the medicine will not work.

What are the side effects of this treatment?

Every person responds differently to treatment. You may experience any of the following with Palbociclib (Ibrance):

Most common side effects

- Nausea and/or vomiting
- Fatigue or weakness
- Diarrhea
- Mouth sores
- Infection
- Low white blood cell counts (can increase risk of infection)
- Low red blood cell counts (can lead to tiredness and weakness)
- Hair thinning
- Rash

Common side effects

- Low platelet counts (can lead to easy bruising and bleeding)
- Decreased appetite
- Nosebleeds

Every person responds differently to treatment. You may experience any of the following with Fulvestrant (Faslodex):

- Hot flashes or flushing
- Stomach pain
- Back pain
- Headache
- Sore throat or cough
- Nausea
- Pain or soreness at the place where the injection was given

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 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
- Call your doctor if you start any new medicines (prescription, over-the-counter, or herbal)
- 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

Is there anything else I should know about this treatment?

- Palbociclib (Ibrance) may cause changes in your blood counts. Your doctor will want to check your blood counts at the start of this treatment, every 2 weeks for the first 2 months and then every 1 to 3 months.
- **Do not eat grapefruit or drink grapefruit juice, Seville oranges or star fruit.** This can increase your risk of side effects.
- This treatment may make it harder for your body to fight infections. Wash your hands often and avoid people who are sick.
- 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.