Goserelin

What is Goserelin (GOE-se-rel-in) and how does it work?
Goserelin is a cancer drug known as an “LHRH agonist”. Another name for this drug is Zoladex. This medicine is made in a laboratory. This drug, only given to pre-menopausal women, causes the ovaries to shut down and stop producing estrogen. It fights cancer, or prevents cancer from coming back, by lowering the amount of estrogen in the body. This stops the cancer cells that feed on estrogen from growing. This type of therapy is also known as “endocrine” or “hormone blocking” therapy which is different from chemotherapy.

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

- 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 medicine is the same for all patients. This drug is given every 4 weeks. It is important that you do not miss any of your appointments, so that you stay on schedule during this treatment. Your doctor will talk to you about how long you will receive this drug. You will see the doctor or nurse practitioner at certain times 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?
Goserelin is a small implant (about the size of a pencil tip) that is placed under the skin. The implant slowly dissolves and releases the drug over the course of one month. Prior to putting in the implant, your nurse will spray the area with a numbing medicine, or use several small injections of an anesthetic (lidocaine) to numb the area. Your nurse will inject the implant just under the skin in the tummy area. The 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:

- Your menstrual period will stop because the drug is shutting down your ovaries
- Hot flashes
- Headache
- Mood changes
- Vaginal changes/dryness/itching
- Discomfort with intercourse or loss of interest in sex
- Fatigue
- Depression
- Weakening of the bones (may occur with long term treatment)

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

- Vaginal spotting or bleeding
- If you think you are pregnant
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Swelling of the face, lips or throat
- Severe pain, blistering, redness or swelling where the implant was placed
- Depressed mood or sadness
Is there anything else I should know about this treatment?

- It may take 4 weeks for the drug to begin working. You may have an extra menstrual period after your first dose. This extra period may have a heavier than normal menstrual flow.

- You should drink 8 to 10 eight-ounce glasses of non-caffeinated fluid each day. This is important to keep you hydrated while you are receiving this treatment. It is especially helpful if you are experiencing hot flashes.

- This treatment causes women to stop having menstrual periods. Depending on your age, your period may or may not return when the drug is stopped.

- This drug should prevent you from becoming pregnant, but you need to talk with your doctor about birth control before starting this treatment. You should not become pregnant while receiving this drug.

- If your doctor stops this treatment it may be difficult to become pregnant, even after the treatment is finished and your periods have returned.

- To make sure the drug is working, your doctor may check the blood levels of your hormones during your 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 to help you learn tips for managing treatment side effects.