Anastrozole

- **Anastrozole** is a drug that is used to treat breast cancer. It only works in women who are post-menopausal and producing estrogen outside the ovaries. Anastrozole is a tablet that you take by mouth.
- It is important to **take** anastrozole exactly as directed by your doctor. Make sure you understand the directions.
- Anastrozole may be taken **with food or on an empty stomach** with a glass of water or juice.
- If you **miss** a dose of anastrozole, take it as soon as you can if it is within 12 hours of the missed dose. If it is over 12 hours since your missed dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your usual dosing times.
- **Store** anastrozole tablets out of the reach of children, at room temperature, away from heat, light and moisture.
- Some drugs, herbal products and supplements may **interact** with your treatment. Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking any of these or before you start taking any new drugs.
- Because anastrozole works by reducing the amount of estrogen produced by your body, inform your doctor or pharmacist before taking any **medication containing estrogen or estrogen replacement therapy.**
- Anastrozole has **lactose** in it. The amount is very small but may rarely cause some gastric upset in persons who are lactose intolerant.
- **Tell** doctors, dentists or other healthcare providers that you are being treated with this medication before you receive any other treatment from them
- Anastrozole is usually **well tolerated** and serious side effects are rare.

Side effects that may occur and tips for management

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
Nausea (upset stomach) may occur when you first start taking anastrozole. This usually improves as your body adjusts to anastrozole. Most people have little or no nausea.	It is easier to prevent nausea than treat it once it has occurred, so follow directions closely. • Drink plenty of liquids. • Eat and drink often in small amounts. If nausea is a problem: • Take your anastrozole after eating.
Hot flashes (sudden sweating and feelings of warmth) can sometimes occur when you first start taking anastrozole. This usually improves as your body adjusts to anastrozole.	If hot flashes are troublesome: • Try taking your anastrozole at bedtime. • If night sweats interfere with sleep, try taking your anastrozole in the morning. • Some people find it helpful by avoiding alcohol, spicy food, caffeine intake (coffee, tea, and cola, chocolate). • Follow a regular exercise program. • Try staying in a cool environment • Wear layers so that if you do experience a hot flash, the outer layers may be removed. • Ask your doctor for more advice if your hot flashes continue to bother you. There may be medication available.
Muscle or joint pain may occur a few days after your treatment.	• You may take paracetamol (Panadol®) for mild to moderate pain. • Tell your doctor if the pain interferes with your activity.
Headache may occur.	• Take paracetamol (Panadol ®)
Swelling of hands, feet or lower legs may occur if your body retains extra fluid.	If swelling is a problem: • Elevate your feet when sitting. • Avoid tight clothing. • Tell your doctor if this continues to bother you.
Hair loss is rare with anastrozole. Your hair will grow back once you stop treatment with anastrozole. Colour and texture may change.	• Use a gentle shampoo and soft brush. • Apply mineral oil to your scalp to reduce itching.
Bone loss (osteoporosis) may occur over time.	
Increase in cholesterol or triglycerides may occur.	Discuss this with your doctor if you have: • A history of heart disease. • High blood pressure. • Elevated triglycerides. • You may need to have your cholesterol level checked a few months after starting anastrozole.

Patient education leaflet
Adapted from BC Cancer Drug Manual - Canada (Developed: 2001, Limited revision: 1 June 2015)
Prepared by Clinical Pharmacy Department at the National Center for Cancer Care and Research - Version 1 on May 2017

CHECK WITH YOUR DOCTOR IF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING CONTINUE OR BOTHER YOU:

- Uncontrolled nausea, vomiting, diarrhea or constipation.
- Hot flashes that are troublesome.
- Vaginal bleeding, discomfort or discharge.
- Excessive swelling of hands, feet or lower legs.
- Headache not controlled with paracetamol.
- Skin rash.
- Depression.
- Significant weight gain.
- Significant persisting aches and pains.

REPORT ADDITIONAL PROBLEMS TO YOUR DOCTOR

This is a summary of useful information to help you understand and take your medicine safely .

We are available to answer your questions For urgent inquiries contact :

- **Urgent care unit at the National Center of Cancer Care and Research (NCCCR) TEL : 44397179 (available 24 hours, all week days).**

For further information or question contact :

- **Your doctor** (from 7 am – 3 pm) .
- **Clinical Pharmacy section,** TEL: 44397239 (Sun-Thurs from 7 am – 3 pm) .
- **Outpatient Pharmacy**, TEL: 44397531, 44397825 (Sun-Thurs from 7 am – 3 pm) .

Pharmacy Department

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