

ANASTROZOLE

Brand name Arimidex

Used in the following combined preparations None

GENERAL INFORMATION

Anastrozole is a potent non-steroidal inhibitor of the enzyme that manufactures oestradiol (natural oestrogen) in the body. It can reduce production of oestradiol by more than 80 per cent. It works by blocking oestradiol production in the peripheral tissues of the body, rather than in the ovary itself, so it is not suitable for use in premenopausal women where the ovaries are still producing oestrogen. The drug is used in postmenopausal women

to treat types of breast cancer in which the tumour cells have oestrogen receptors (known as oestrogen-receptor-positive breast cancer).

Anastrozole is generally well tolerated; adverse effects are mainly gastrointestinal or gynaecological, and are generally similar to menopausal symptoms. If there is any doubt about whether a woman to be treated is postmenopausal, a biochemical test may be performed.

QUICK REFERENCE

Drug group Anticancer drug (p.112)

Overdose danger rating Low

Dependence rating Low

Prescription needed Yes

Available as generic No

INFORMATION FOR USERS

Your drug prescription is tailored for you. Do not alter dosage without checking with your doctor.

How taken/used



Tablets.

Frequency and timing of doses

Once daily.

Adult dosage range

1mg.

Onset of effect

30 minutes.

Duration of action

24 hours.

Diet advice

None.

Storage

Keep in original container at room temperature out of the reach of children.

Missed dose

Take as soon as you remember. If your next dose is due within 2 hours, take a single dose now and skip the next.

Stopping the drug

Do not stop the drug without consulting your doctor. Stopping the drug may lead to worsening of the underlying condition.

Exceeding the dose

An occasional unintentional extra dose is unlikely to be a cause for concern. But if you notice any unusual symptoms, or if a large overdose has been taken, notify your doctor.

SPECIAL PRECAUTIONS

Be sure to tell your doctor if:

- You are premenopausal.
- You have osteoporosis.
- You have kidney or liver problems.
- You are allergic to anastrozole.
- You are taking other medicines.



Pregnancy

Not prescribed in pregnancy.



Breast-feeding

Not prescribed when breast-feeding.



Infants and children

Not recommended.



Over 60

No special problems.



Driving and hazardous work

Do not drive until you know how the drug affects you. It can cause drowsiness.



Alcohol

No known problems.

POSSIBLE ADVERSE EFFECTS

Anastrozole is usually well tolerated and any side effects tend to be relatively minor, except

for the increased risk of osteoporosis and bone fracture.

Symptom/effect	Frequency		Discuss with doctor		Stop taking drug now	Call doctor now
	Common	Rare	Only if severe	In all cases		
Hot flushes	●		●			
Headache/fatigue/dizziness	●		●			
Joint pain/stiffness	●		●			
Vaginal dryness	●		●			
Hair thinning	●		●			
Nausea/diarrhoea	●		●			
Rash		●		●	●	●

INTERACTIONS

Tamoxifen and oestrogens oppose the effects of anastrozole.

PROLONGED USE

No known problems.

Monitoring Women with osteoporosis or at risk of osteoporosis will have their bone mineral density assessed at the start of treatment and at regular intervals.