



## Anti-cancer treatment (Hormonal): Anastrozole (Arimidex®)

Pronounced: *"an-AS-troe-zole"*

**How drug is given:** By Mouth

**Purpose:** Treatment for breast cancer and other cancers.

### How to take this drug

- Take this medication with or without food.
- Swallow each tablet whole; do not crush or chew. If you have trouble swallowing the tablet, the pharmacist will give you specific instructions.
- If you miss a dose, take it as soon as possible. However, if it is almost time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your regular dosing schedule. **Do not double dose.**
- Wash your hands after taking the medication. Avoid handling crushed or broken tablets.
- Check any supplements or herbs you are taking for estrogen or estrogen-like products. It is important to discuss the use of supplements or herbs with your cancer care team.

### Storage and Disposal

- Store at room temperature, away from heat and moisture.
- Keep this medicine in its original container, out of reach of children and pets.
- If you have unused oral chemotherapy tablets, please return them to the pharmacy where the prescription was filled. Do not flush down the toilet, dump in the sink, or throw away in the trash.

### Things that may occur during treatment

- Hot flashes and/or sweats are common. As your body gets used to the drug, these may not bother you as much. Caffeine, spicy food, alcohol, and stress may cause these to get worse. Mild exercise may help.
- You may feel pain or weakness in your joints or muscles. If these bother you, ask your cancer care team what type of drugs you may use to help with this pain.
- This drug may cause thinning and weakening of bones with long-term use. This can lead to brittle bones that break or fracture more easily, like in the case of a minor fall. If you have osteoporosis or bone density loss talk with your cancer care team.

- Some patients may have mild nausea. You may be given medicine to help with this.

### **Sexual health and reproductive concerns**

If you are concerned about any of this, please talk with your cancer care team.

#### **Women**

- To keep from getting pregnant, use a barrier form of effective birth control and keep using it for at least 3 months after you stop treatment.
- Barrier methods of birth control prevent the sperm from reaching the egg. Discuss with your cancer team which type of barrier method is best for you. Some barrier methods are cervical caps, female/male condoms, and diaphragms with spermicides. Some are available over-the-counter; others must be prescribed.
- Women should not breast-feed while receiving this medicine.

Managing your oral chemotherapy schedule at home can be challenging. To help you with this, there are tools to help you keep track of your schedule and any side effects you may have. You can find these at [www.dana-farber.org/OralChemoDiary](http://www.dana-farber.org/OralChemoDiary).

*The information in this document includes some, but not necessarily all, of the possible side effects of this medication. The side effects listed here may not be the same ones you experience. Your side effects may be different, depending on how often you receive treatment (your schedule) and how much you receive each time (your dosage). Side effects may also vary if you are taking other medications. Please speak with your cancer care team if you have questions about possible side effects you may experience. This document should not take the place of conversations with members of your cancer care team.*

*If you experience any significant change in your health during or after treatment, contact a member of your cancer care team right away.*