Anastrozole (Arimidex®)  
(“an-AS-troe-zole”)

How drug is given: by mouth

Purpose: stops non-ovarian estrogen production in the body and may decrease growth of breast cancer

How to take the 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’s 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 pills (tablets or capsules), please return them to the pharmacy where the prescription was filled. Do not flush them down the toilet, dump in the sink, or throw away in the trash.

Things that may occur during treatment

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

2. 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.
3. You may feel pain or weakness in your joints or muscles. If this bothers you, ask your cancer care team what types of drugs you may use to help with this pain.

4. Fertility and Related Precautions:
   - It is very important to use birth control if you are having sex, because this drug may be harmful to an unborn baby.
   - Women should not breastfeed while receiving this drug.
   - If you are concerned about any of this, please talk with your cancer care team.

The above information includes some, but not necessarily all, of the possible side effects of this medication. The side effects listed in this teaching sheet 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.

Managing your medicine schedule at home can be challenging. To help you with this, consider using tools to help you keep track of your schedule and any side effects you may have. You can find these tools online at www.dana-farber.org/OralChemoDiary.

This space reserved for written comments or notes for the patient and family: