



## **Anti-cancer treatment (hormonal): Fulvestrant (Faslodex®)**

Pronounced: "FULL-veh-strant"

**How drug is given:** By injection in the muscle

**Purpose:** To block the estrogen receptor in breast cancer cells of postmenopausal women

### **Things that may occur during treatment or within hours of treatment**

- Burning, itching, redness, or swelling at the injection site may occur. These reactions are usually mild and go away. Applying a cold pack to the area may help.
- Some patients have mild nausea. You may be given medicine to help with this.
- Hot flashes and/or sweats are common. As your body gets used to the drug, these may not bother you as much. Caffeine, spicy foods, alcohol, and stress may cause these to get worse. Mild exercise may help.

### **Things that may occur a few days to weeks later**

- You may feel weakness or pain 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.
- Some patients may feel very tired, also known as fatigue. You may need to rest or take naps more often. Mild to moderate exercise may help you maintain your energy.
- This medicine may reduce the number of healthy red blood cells in your body. This can lead to anemia. Symptoms can begin with tiredness and progress to severe dizziness and shortness of breath. Call your cancer care team right away if you have shortness of breath, a fast heartbeat, dizziness, or confusion.
- You may have vaginal dryness, which may cause discomfort during sex. Vaginal lubricants, such as KY jelly®, Astro Glide®, or Replens®, may be helpful. Speak with your cancer care team for helpful options if these lubricants do not work.
- Vaginal dryness may increase your risk of urinary tract infections (UTI). Drink plenty of fluids (water or cranberry juice may be helpful). Report any burning or urgency with urination.
- Your liver may be affected by this medicine. On occasion, blood work will be taken to monitor your liver function.
- Your kidneys could be hurt by this drug and not work as well.

## Sexual health and fertility concerns

- If you are concerned about any of this, please talk with your cancer care team.
- It is not safe to take this medicine during pregnancy. It could harm an unborn baby.

### Women

- To keep from getting pregnant, use a barrier form of effective birth control and keep using it for at least 12 **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 and for 1 month after you stop treatment.

*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.*