

## Arimidex®

---

**Generic Name:** Anastrozole

Arimidex® is the trade name for the generic drug anastrozole. In some cases, health care professionals may use the trade name Arimidex® when referring to the generic drug name anastrozole.

**Drug Type:** Arimidex is a hormone therapy. Arimidex fights cancer as an "aromatase inhibitor." (For more detail see "How Arimidex Works" below).

### What Arimidex Is Used For:

Arimidex is used to treat breast cancer in postmenopausal women.

Note: If a drug has been approved for one use, physicians sometimes elect to use this same drug for other problems if they believe it might be helpful.

### How Arimidex Is Given:

- Arimidex is a pill, taken by mouth.

- You should take Arimidex at about the same time each day. You may take Arimidex with or without food. If you miss a dose, do not take a double dose the next day.
- You should not stop taking Arimidex without discussing with your physician.
- The amount of Arimidex that you will receive depends on many factors, including your general health or other health problems, and the type of cancer or condition being treated. Your doctor will determine your dose and how long you will be taking Arimidex.

### Side Effects Of Arimidex:

Important things to remember about the side effects of Arimidex:

- Most people do not experience all of the side effects listed.
- Side effects are often predictable in terms of their onset and duration.
- Side effects are almost always reversible and will go away after treatment is complete.
- There are many options to help minimize or prevent side effects.
- There is no relationship between the presence or severity of side effects and the effectiveness of the medication.

The following side effects are common (occurring in greater than 30%) for patients taking Arimidex:

- Hot Flashes
- Muscle/Joint pain

The following side effects are less common (occurring in 10-29%) for patients taking Arimidex:

- Nausea (mild)
- Decreased energy
- Mood disturbances

Not all side effects are listed above, some that are rare (occurring in less than 10% of patients) are not listed here. However, you should always inform your health care provider if you experience any unusual symptoms.

### When To Contact Your Doctor or Health Care Professional:

The following symptoms require medical attention, but are not emergency situations. Contact your health care provider *within 24 hours* of noticing any of the following:

- Vaginal bleeding (similar to a period)

Always inform your health care provider if you experience any unusual symptoms.

### Arimidex Precautions:

- Before starting Arimidex treatment, make sure you tell your doctor about any other medications you are taking (including over-the-counter drugs, vitamins, or herbal remedies).
- Inform your health care professional if you are pregnant or may be pregnant prior to starting this treatment. Pregnancy category D (Arimidex may be hazardous to the fetus. Women who are pregnant or become pregnant must be advised of the potential hazard to the fetus).
- For both men and women: Do not conceive a child (get pregnant) while taking Arimidex. Barrier methods of contraception, such as condoms, are recommended. Discuss with your doctor when you may safely become pregnant or conceive a child after therapy.
- Do not breast feed while taking Arimidex.

#### **Arimidex Self Care Tips:**

- If you are experiencing hot flashes, wearing light clothing, staying in a cool environment, and putting cool cloths on your head may reduce symptoms. Consult you health care provider if these worsen, or become intolerable.
- Acetaminophen or ibuprophen may help relieve discomfort from generalized aches and pains. However, be sure to talk with your doctor before taking it.

- Arimidex causes little nausea. However, to reduce nausea, take anti-nausea medications as prescribed by your doctor, and eat small, frequent meals.
- Get plenty of rest
- Maintain good nutrition
- If you experience symptoms or side effects, be sure to discuss them with your health care team. They can prescribe medications and/or offer other suggestions that are effective in managing such problems.

#### **Monitoring and Testing While Taking Arimidex:**

You will be monitored regularly by your doctor while you are taking Arimidex, but no special tests or blood work are required.

#### **How Arimidex Works:**

Hormones are chemical substances that are produced by glands in the body, which enter the bloodstream and cause effects in other tissues. For example, the hormone testosterone made in the testicles and is responsible for male characteristics such as deepening voice and increased body hair. The use of hormone therapy to treat cancer is based on the observation that receptors for specific hormones that are needed for cell growth are on the surface of some tumor cells. Hormone therapies work by stopping the production of a certain

hormone, blocking hormone receptors, or substituting chemically similar agents for the active hormone, which cannot be used by the tumor cell. The different types of hormone therapies are categorized by their function and/or the type of hormone that is effected.

Arimidex is an aromatase inhibitor. This means it blocks the enzyme aromatase (found in the body's muscle, skin, breast and fat), which is used to convert androgens (hormones produced by the adrenal glands) into estrogen. In the absence of estrogen, tumors dependent on this hormone for growth will shrink.

**Note:** We strongly encourage you to talk with your health care professional about your specific medical condition and treatments. The information contained in this website is meant to be helpful and educational, but is not a substitute for medical advice

*updated 8/27/2012*

*Chemocare.com is designed to provide the latest information about chemotherapy to patients and their families, caregivers and friends. All rights reserved.*

*<http://www.chemocare.com/chemotherapy/drug-info/arimidex.aspx>*