

Anastrozole

Names	The generic drug name is anastrozole (an AS troe zole). The brand name is Arimidex®. There may be other names for this medication.
How is it Administered?	Anastrozole comes as a tablet. You may take it with or without food, but take it at the same time every day.
Why Am I Taking Anastrozole?	<p>This medication is used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• alone or with other treatments for early breast cancer in postmenopausal women• as a first treatment of breast cancer that has spread within the breast or to other parts of the body• in women whose breast cancer has worsened after taking tamoxifen (Nolvadex®)• to prevent breast cancer in women who are at high risk of developing the disease
How Does it Work?	<p>Anastrozole is in a class of medications called aromatase inhibitors, a type of hormone therapy. It stops an enzyme (aromatase) from changing hormones made by the adrenal glands (androgens) into the hormone estrogen. In postmenopausal women, this is the primary source of estrogen.</p> <p>When aromatase is blocked, estrogen levels go down. If the breast cancer is a type that grows when estrogen is present, then less estrogen may cause tumor growth to slow or stop.</p>
What Should I Tell My Doctor Before I Begin Anastrozole?	<p>Tell your doctor if you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• have had an allergic reaction to anastrozole or any of its ingredients• are taking medication, supplements, or herbal products that contain estrogen• are pregnant or breastfeeding• have or have ever had high cholesterol, osteoporosis (a condition in which the bones are thin and fragile), liver disease, or heart disease <p>This drug may interact with other medications or cause harmful side effects. Tell your doctor and pharmacist about <u>all</u> prescription or over-the-counter medications, vitamins, herbal, or diet supplements that you are taking.</p>

What Are Some Possible Side Effects?

- Hot flashes, flushing, or sweating
- Joint or muscle pain
- Mild nausea, heartburn
- Fatigue, weakness, and/or headache
- Mood changes, problems sleeping, nervousness

How Can I Manage These Side Effects?

- Wear light or layered clothing, stay in a cool environment, and put cool cloths on the back of your neck to help with hot flashes.
- Ask your doctor about medication to help prevent or lessen nausea or headache.
- Take your medication with food if you are having problems with nausea.
- Talk to your doctor about what which water-based lubricant is best to help you deal with vaginal dryness.

When Should I Call the Doctor?

Call your doctor right away if you have:

- signs of infection: **fever of 100.4°F (38°C)** or higher, chills, cough, sore throat, pain or burning upon urination; redness or tenderness along a vein, at an IV site, or at any other wound or skin irritation
- signs of an allergic reaction: itching or hives. Call 911 or go to the nearest hospital ER if you have signs of a severe reaction: swelling in your face, mouth, throat, or chest tightness; wheezing; trouble breathing or swallowing; dizziness/fainting; or (heart) palpitations
- chest pain
- vaginal bleeding that continues past the first few weeks of treatment

What Else Should I Know About Anastrozole?

- Take anastrozole exactly as directed, at the same time every day. Do not take more or less than prescribed. Talk to your doctor before you stop taking anastrozole.
- Anastrozole should only be taken by women who have already been through menopause. If you can get pregnant, use a reliable method of birth control to prevent pregnancy. Anastrozole may harm the fetus.
- If you are having surgery, including dental surgery, tell the doctor or dentist that you are taking anastrozole.
- Anastrozole may cause or worsen osteoporosis, increasing your risk for bone fractures.
- Store this medicine away from heat, direct light, or moisture.
- If you would like more information about anastrozole, talk to your doctor or pharmacist.