

# Megestrol Acetate

Names	The generic drug name is megestrol(me-JES-trole AS-e-tate). The brand name is Megace®. There may be other names for this medication.
What is it Used For and How is it Administered?	This drug is used to treat cancer of the breast or endometrium (uterus). It is also used to increase appetite and prevent weight loss. Your medicine will be taken by mouth as a tablet or a liquid.
How Does it Work?	<p>Our bodies produce hormones that travel through the bloodstream and have effects on “target” organs and tissues. Hormones play a vital role in our metabolism, sexual characteristics, fluid balance, growth, etc. Sometimes, a hormone makes a particular type of cancer grow, so drugs/hormones have been developed either to stop the production of that hormone or to block the hormone from attaching to receptors on our cells. In doing so, it effectively blocks the effects of that hormone.</p> <p>Megestrol is a type of hormone therapy, specifically a progestin (a synthetic version of the hormone progesterone.) Megestrol interferes with cancers that grow in the presence of estrogen.</p>
What Should I Tell My Doctor Before I Begin Megestrol?	<p>Tell your doctor if you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• have had an allergic reaction to megestrol</li><li>• are taking antibiotics or indinavir (Crixivan)</li><li>• have or have ever had a blood clot anywhere in the body, a stroke, diabetes, or kidney or liver disease</li><li>• are pregnant or breastfeeding</li></ul> <p><b>This drug may interact with other medications. Tell your doctor and pharmacist about any prescription or over-the-counter medications, vitamins, or supplements that you are taking.</b></p>
What Are Some Possible Side Effects?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Impotence, decreased sexual desire (men)</li><li>• Unexpected vaginal bleeding, decreased sexual desire (women)</li><li>• Difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep</li><li>• Gas and/or nausea</li></ul>

What Are Some Possible Side Effects? (cont.)

- Rash
- Swelling in feet and hands, weight gain
- Nausea, vomiting
- Extreme thirst, frequent urination

How Can I Manage These Side Effects?

- Ask your doctor about medication to help prevent or lessen nausea.
- Do not put anything on your rash without first getting your doctor's permission.

When Should I Call the Doctor?

**Call 911 or go to the nearest ER if you have life-threatening side effects** such as a severe allergic reaction (difficulty breathing; swelling of face, throat, or mouth; chest tightness).

**Call your doctor immediately if you have:**

- any sign 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
- pain or redness in your calf
- shortness of breath or chest pain

**Call your doctor as soon as possible if you have:**

- Nausea not relieved by prescribed medication or that prevents you from eating or drinking
- Abnormal vaginal bleeding
- Pain, weakness, or numbness in wrists
- Weight gain of 5 pounds or more in 1 week

What Else Should I Know About Megestrol?

- This medication may take up to 2 months to work.
- Oral liquid medication: Shake the bottle before each use.
- Missed dose: Take it as soon as you can. If it is almost time for your next dose, wait until then to take the medicine and skip the missed dose. Do not use extra medicine to make up for a missed dose.
- Store the medicine at room temperature in a closed container, away from heat, moisture, and direct light. (not in the bathroom)
- This medicine may cause increased appetite and weight gain.
- Though megestrol may interfere with the normal menstrual cycle, do not assume you cannot get pregnant. Both men and women should use effective birth control; barrier methods are recommended.
- Tell your doctors or dentists that you are taking megestrol.
- Questions? Talk to your doctor or pharmacist.