Patient Education

Megestrol Acetate
(me-JES-trole AS-e-tate)

Brand Names
Megace® (There may be other brand names for this medication)

How is it Administered?
Your medicine will be taken by mouth as a tablet or a liquid.

What is it Used For?
This drug is used to treat cancer of the breast or endometrium (uterus). Also used to increase appetite and prevent weight loss.

How Does it Work?
Our bodies produce hormones that travel through the bloodstream and have effects on “target” organs and tissues throughout our bodies. Hormones play a vital role in our metabolism, our sexual characteristics, fluid balance, growth, and many other important functions.

Sometimes, certain cancers grow in response to the presence of a particular hormone, 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.

Megestrol is a type of hormone therapy, specifically a progestin (a synthetic version of the hormone progesterone.) Megestrol interferes with the effects of estrogen on certain cancers that are encouraged to grow in the presence of estrogen.

What Should I Tell My Doctor Before I Begin Receiving Megestrol?

Tell your doctor if you:
- have had an allergic reaction to megestrol
- are taking antibiotics or indinavir (Crixivan)
- have or have ever had a blood clot anywhere in the body, a stroke, diabetes, or kidney or liver disease
- are pregnant or breastfeeding

This drug may interact with other medications, increasing or decreasing their effectiveness or causing harmful side effects. Tell your doctor and pharmacist about any prescription or over-the-counter medications, vitamins, herbal or diet supplements that you are taking.
What Are Some Possible Side Effects I May Experience?

- Impotence (men)
- Decreased sexual desire
- Unexpected vaginal bleeding (women)
- Difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep
- Gas and/or nausea
- Rash
- Swelling in feet and hands
- Weight gain

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 your doctor immediately if you experience:

- any sign of infection: fever of 100.5°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
- any sign of an allergic reaction: itching or hives, swelling in your face or hands, swelling or tingling in your mouth or throat, chest tightness, trouble breathing, dizziness, or palpitations
- Pain or redness in your calf
- Shortness of breath or chest pain

Call your doctor as soon as possible if you experience:

- Nausea that is 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?

- For cancer treatment, you may need to take this medicine for at least 2 months before it starts to work.
- If you are using the oral liquid medicine, shake the bottle thoroughly before each use. Pour the liquid into the medicine cup to measure your correct dose.
• If you miss a dose or forget to take your medicine, 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.

• Taking this medicine for a long time may increase the risk of some kinds of cancer. Talk to your doctor about this risk.

• This medicine may cause increased appetite and weight gain.

• You should know that megestrol may interfere with the normal menstrual cycle (period) in women. Do NOT, however, assume that you cannot become pregnant or get your partner pregnant. Use a reliable method of birth control to prevent pregnancy.

• If you are having surgery, including dental surgery, during or shortly after your treatment, tell the doctor or dentist that you are taking megestrol.

• If you would like more information about megestrol, talk to your doctor.