



Provincial Health Services Authority

For the Patient: GUPLHRHA

Therapy for Advanced Prostate Cancer Using LHRH Antagonist Degarelix

GU = GenitoUrinary

P = Prostate

LHRHA = Luteinizing Hormone Releasing Hormone Antagonist

ABOUT THIS MEDICATION

What is this drug used for?

- Degarelix (FIRMAGON®) is used to treat advanced prostate cancer that may or may not have spread to other parts of the body in patients who have declined surgery.

How does this drug work?

- Degarelix works by reducing the release of testosterone from the testes.

TREATMENT SUMMARY

How is this drug given?

- Degarelix is given as an injection under the skin (subcutaneously or SC) of the abdomen.
- The starting dose is 240 mg SC (given as two injections of 120 mg) on day 1.
- One month after the starting dose, a dose of 80 mg SC (as a single injection) is given and will be given once monthly. This 1 month period is called a cycle and you may go through many cycles of treatment depending on response to treatment and/or side effects experienced.
- To reduce pain and swelling during injection: inject the drug slowly, leave the needle in the skin for 30 seconds after injecting, and withdraw the needle slowly.

What will happen when I get my drugs?

- Blood tests may be taken prior to the start of degarelix and regularly during treatment.

SIDE EFFECTS AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT THEM

Your doctor will review the risks of treatment and possible side effects with you before starting treatment.

Side effects for **DEGARELIX** are listed in the following table in the order in which they may occur. Tips to help manage the side effects are included.

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
Pain or tenderness may occur where the needle was placed.	Apply cool compresses or soak in cool water for 15-20 minutes several times a day.
Nausea does not usually occur with degarelix.	
Hot flashes (sudden sweating and feelings of warmth) may sometimes occur with degarelix.	If hot flashes are troublesome: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some people find it helpful to avoid alcohol, spicy food, and caffeine (coffee, tea, colas, chocolate).• Follow a regular exercise program.• Try staying in a cool environment.• Wear layers so that if you do experience a hot flash, the outer layers may be removed.• Ask your doctor for more advice if your hot flashes continue to bother you. There may be medications available.
Muscle or joint pain may sometimes occur.	You may take acetaminophen (e.g., TYLENOL®) every 4-6 hours to a maximum of 4 g (4000 mg) per day or ibuprofen (e.g., ADVIL®) for mild to moderate pain. Tell your doctor if the pain interferes with your activity.
Decreased libido (loss of sexual desire) may occur.	This may return to normal when you stop taking degarelix.
Impotence (loss of sexual ability) may occur.	This may return to normal when you stop taking degarelix.
Hair loss does not occur with degarelix.	
Bone loss (osteoporosis) may occur over time.	Speak to your physician for more information. To help prevent bone loss: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supplement with vitamin D and calcium• Participate in weight bearing exercises

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PATIENT:

SEE YOUR DOCTOR OR GET EMERGENCY HELP IMMEDIATELY IF YOU HAVE:

- Signs of an **allergic reaction** (rare) soon after a treatment including dizziness, fast heart beat, face swelling, skin rash or itching, or breathing problems.
- Signs of a **stroke** such as sudden onset of severe headache, eyesight changes, slurred speech, loss of coordination, weakness or numbness in arm or leg.
- Signs of **heart problems** such as fast or uneven heartbeat, chest pain, chest pressure, shortness of breath or difficulty in breathing, swelling of feet or lower legs, or fainting.

SEE YOUR DOCTOR AS SOON AS POSSIBLE (DURING OFFICE HOURS) IF YOU HAVE:

- Signs of **anemia** such as unusual tiredness or weakness.
- Signs of **liver problems** such as yellow eyes or skin, white or clay-coloured stools.
- Signs of **kidney problems** such as lower back or side pain, swelling of feet or lower legs.
- Signs of **bladder problems** such as cloudy or foul smelling urine, painful burning sensation, presence of blood, or changes in urination.

If you experience symptoms or changes in your body that have not been described above but worry you, or if any symptoms are severe, contact _____ at telephone number _____