

Hormone therapy for prostate cancer

Urology Department

Patient Information Leaflet

Introduction

This leaflet is for men whose cancer has spread beyond the prostate to nearby glands or bones. It gives you information on hormone therapy, the benefits and risks of it and how the treatment is given. It has been written to help you understand more about the treatment options open to you.

If you would like more detailed information, please contact one of our urology nurse specialists.

What is hormone therapy?

Most types of prostate cancer need the hormone testosterone to grow. Hormone therapy for prostate cancer stops your body producing this hormone. This can slow the progression of advanced prostate cancer and relieve the symptoms. It cannot cure the cancer on its own.

Hormone therapy is given as a combination of:

- injections to stop your body making testosterone, called luteinising hormone-releasing hormone (LHRH) agonists.
- tablets to block the effects or reduce the production of testosterone, called anti-androgen treatment.

What are the benefits of having hormone therapy?

This treatment can stop your cancer from progressing and can help to control pain caused by spread of the cancer to nearby glands or bones.

What are the risks of having hormone therapy?

There are risks to nearly all types of treatments. The risks of hormone therapy for prostate cancer are:

- Hot flushes and night sweats – these are common and may be severe in the first six to 12 months
- Breast swelling and tenderness
- Weight gain
- A reduced sex drive
- Impotence – you will probably experience impotence once you start treatment. This means you will have difficulty getting erections
- Thinning of the bones
- Tiredness

You may also notice that you have to shave less often.

Less common side effects are:

- Joint pain
- Changes in blood pressure
- Skin rashes

There are medicines that can help with some of these side effects so if you are having problems, please speak to your GP or urology nurse specialist.

What are the alternatives?

Your consultant will have explained the treatment options that are best for you. This will be based on the risks and benefits of the treatments and your individual circumstances.

The treatment options available are:

- Hormone injections which reduce the testosterone level in your body.
- Surgical removal of the part of the testicles that produces testosterone. The medical name of this is a subcapsular orchidectomy.

Both options are equally effective. The choice about which treatment you have is up to you.

What happens if I do not to have this treatment?

Your consultant will discuss this with you in detail. Without treatment, your cancer may progress and it may be difficult to control any symptoms you have.

How is the treatment given?

You will need to take tablets for two weeks before your first injection and two weeks after it. The tablets will be either:

- Cyprostate (cyproterone acetate) which reduces the amount of testosterone produced by your body
- or
- Casodex (bicalutamide) which stops testosterone from getting into the cancer cells

The first injection is usually given by one of the urology specialist nurses at the hospital. They will be able to answer any questions you have. The injection is given just under the skin on your abdomen (tummy area) or in your arm. Most men do not find this too uncomfortable.

After this, we will contact your GP and you will be given the rest of the injections by your GP or practice nurse. You should contact your GP about a week before the next injection is due, to ensure you have an appointment.

You can have the injections monthly, every three months or every six months. You can discuss with your GP which you prefer. This is your choice and does not affect the treatment outcome. You will need to continue with your injections unless your consultant or specialist nurse tells you to stop, even if you feel well.

What if I cannot have my injection at the correct time?

Please try to have your injection on the correct date. However if you cannot make this date, for example if you are on holiday, you should speak to your GP or practice nurse as soon as possible.

Will the therapy affect other medication I am taking?

It is unlikely that it will affect other medications you are taking but please speak to your GP about this.

Can I find out more?

Many people living with cancer worry about what the future holds. Concerns about tests and treatments are common. It may help if you make a list of your concerns so that you can ask your consultant or urology nurse specialist.

There is also a Dudley Prostate Cancer Support Group that meets monthly. This is open to anyone affected by prostate cancer. If you wish to go to the support group and/or speak to someone receiving the same treatment, please speak to one of the urology nurse specialists (details on the next page).

Contact information for urology nurse specialists

If you have any questions, you would like more information, or if there is anything you do not understand about this leaflet, please contact:

Urology nurse specialists on 01384 456111 ext. 2873 or

mobile 07787 512834 (8am to 4pm, Monday to Friday)

Russells Hall Hospital switchboard number: 01384 456111

This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from:

<http://dudleygroup.nhs.uk/services-and-wards/urology/>

If you have any feedback on this patient information leaflet, please email patient.information@dgh.nhs.uk

Other useful contacts

Prostate Cancer UK

0800 074 8383

Email: info@prostatecanceruk.org

<http://prostatecanceruk.org/>

Prostate Cancer Support Association

0800 035 5302

<http://www.prostatecancersupport.co.uk/>

The Sexual Advice Association

0207 486 7262

<http://www.impotence.org.uk/>

Cancer Research UK

0808 800 4040

<http://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/>

NHS Choices

<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Cancer-of-the-prostate/Pages/Treatment.aspx>

Macmillan Cancer Support

0808 808 0000

<http://www.macmillan.org.uk/Cancerinformation/Cancertypes/Prostate/Treatmentforadvancedprostatecancer/Hormonaltherapy.aspx>

This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 073 0510.

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此宣传单可提供大字版本、音频版本和其它语言版本，请拨打电话：0800 073 0510。

Ulotka dostępna jest również w dużym druku, wersji audio lub w innym języku. W tym celu zadzwoń pod numer 0800 073 0510.

ਇਹ ਪਰਚਾ ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ, ਬੋਲ ਕੇ ਰੀਕਾਰਡ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਅਤੇ ਦੂਸਰੀਆਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ, 0800 073 0510 ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਜੀ।

Aceasta broșura poate fi pusă la dispoziție tipărită cu caractere mari, versiune audio sau în alte limbi, pentru acest lucru va rugăm sunați la 0800 073 0510.

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