



## Pharmacological High Dosage Treatment with Letrozole in Elderly and Younger Postmenopausal Breast Cancer Patients

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### DESCRIPTION

Letrozole, sold under brand names such as Femara, is an aromatase inhibitor used to treat breast cancer. Letrozole is used to treat early-stage breast cancer in women who have gone through menopause (a life change, the end of each monthly menstrual period) and have had other treatments such as radiation or surgery to remove the tumor. It is also used to treat early-stage breast cancer in postmenopausal women who have been treated with a drug called tamoxifen (Nolvadex) for five years. It is also used as a first-line treatment for breast cancer that has spread to cancer, or in women whose breast cancer has gotten worse while taking tamoxifen. Letrozole belongs to a class of drugs called nonsteroidal aromatase inhibitors. It works by reducing the amount of estrogen produced by the body. This can slow or stop certain breast cancer cells that need estrogen to grow. Letrozole lowers the levels of the female hormone estrogen in the body. Estrogen stimulates the growth of some breast cancers. These breast cancers are called hormone-sensitive or hormone receptor-positive. Letrozole can stop or slow the growth of these cancers.

Femara is a prescription drug it contains the active ingredient letrozole and is marketed as a generic drug called letrozole. Femara is classified as an aromatase inhibitor (A drug class is a group of drugs that work similarly). Like most drugs, Femara has mild or severe side effects. Serious side effects of Femara are possible, but not common. Femara is suitable for women who have gone through menopause and have estrogen receptor-positive breast cancer. Side effects vary from person to person. It also depends on whether a person is receiving other treatments, for example, radiation therapy. However, it is increasingly being used by fertility professionals as a treatment to help follicles develop. Its use is considered safe and has been practiced for many years. It works by lowering estrogen levels, allowing the ovaries to produce eggs (ovulation).

Femara may lower estrogen levels in postmenopausal women and

slow the growth of certain types of breast tumors that require estrogen to grow in the body. Tell the doctor if a patient is having cholesterol or liver disease (especially cirrhosis). Femara can affect thinking and reactions. Be careful while driving or doing anything that requires attention. The patient may be needed to have frequent blood tests to make sure this medicine is helping the condition or not. Bone density may also need to be checked. Femara is only used by women who can no longer pregnant. Femara can harm an unborn baby. Do not use Femara if a patient who is taking this medicine is pregnant. Use birth control for at least 3 weeks after the last dose of Femara. While using Femara, the patient may need frequent medical tests and may also need to check bone density. Usually, Femara is taken once a day or once every other day. Follow all directions on the prescription label. Do not take this medicine in large or small amounts or for longer than recommended. This medicine can be taken with or without food.

Femara is also used to prevent cancer from coming back. Some breast cancers are made to grow faster because of a natural hormone called estrogen. It is useful for the healthcare team to tell when to stop taking Femara. It is not necessary to stop taking it gradually. Some people fear stopping treatment, but there is evidence that Femara reduces the risk of breast cancer returning years after stopping it.

More severe allergic reactions are rare but possible. Symptoms of a severe allergic reaction include swelling under the skin, usually the eyelids, lips, hands, or feet. It also includes swelling of the tongue, mouth, or throat, which can cause difficulty breathing. Femara is not currently approved for female fertility treatment. However, the drug can be used off-label for this purpose. Both Femara and clomiphene are used to stimulate ovulation in women who have trouble getting pregnant. Femara is effective in treating certain types of breast cancer. Femara is FDA-approved to treat only certain types of breast cancer. Do not take Femara unless prescribed by the doctor. Also, do not use the drug for a condition that it was not prescribed to treat.

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