



**Northern Ireland
Cancer Network**

ANASTROZOLE

**FOR POST MENOPAUSAL WOMEN WITH A
HIGH RISK OF BREAST CANCER**

 Belfast Health and Social Care Trust  Northern Health and Social Care Trust  South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust

 Southern Health and Social Care Trust  Western Health and Social Care Trust

What is anastrozole?

Anastrozole is a tablet that is used to prevent breast cancer in women who are at moderate or high risk of developing the disease.

Anastrozole works by reducing the levels of the hormone oestrogen in the body by blocking an enzyme. Oestrogen is a female hormone that is known to increase the likelihood of a woman developing a certain type of breast cancer, known as oestrogen receptor positive (or ER+) breast cancer

Should I consider taking anastrozole?

You can be prescribed anastrozole if you are post-menopausal and are considered to have a moderate or high risk of breast cancer. Anastrozole is not recommended for women who have not reached their menopause and should be used with caution if you have osteoporosis. If you decide you wish to take anastrozole you will require a bone density scan.

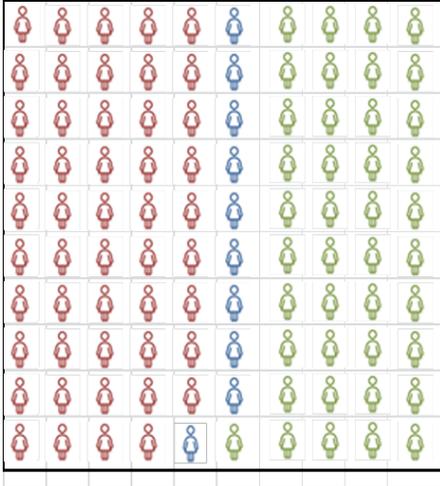
Anastrozole is a tablet that is taken once a day for five years. If you wish to consider taking Anastrozole it is important that you are aware of the benefits of treatment and the possible side effects.

What are the potential benefits?

Studies have shown that anastrozole can reduce the risk of oestrogen sensitive breast cancer in post-menopausal women at high risk by approximately 50%.

What are the potential side effects?

Anastrozole, like many medications may cause unwanted side effects which will be different for each individual. Side effects can include muscular aches and joint pain, hot flushes and vaginal dryness.



HOT FLUSHES

Out of 100 women at increased risk of breast cancer, 49 women will experience hot flushes.

If the same 100 women take anastrozole an additional 8 women will experience hot flushes.

Anastrozole may increase your risk of a fracture, but this has not been shown for certain. You may have a DEXA scan to check your bone density before you start taking anastrozole and from time to time while you are taking it.

Anastrozole has not been shown to make a difference to your chance of blood clot or developing cancer of the womb

Effectiveness

Where do I go from here?

If you are at increased risk of breast cancer and are post-menopausal and want more information about anastrozole, you should discuss this with your doctor or local family history clinic.

Your doctor can tell you more about your risk of breast cancer and ways you can help to reduce your risk. Although having a family history of breast cancer is a significant risk factor it is important to lead a healthy lifestyle. A healthy diet and regular exercise can help to reduce your breast cancer risk as well as your risk of other diseases, such as diabetes, heart disease and stroke.

Useful Contacts

Health and Social Care Trust	Belfast	☎028 9504 1018
	Northern	☎ 028 9442 4874
	South Eastern	☎028 9055 0499
	Southern	☎028 3861 2086
	Western	☎028 7161 1187
Action Cancer	💻 www.actioncancer.org ☎ 02890 803344	
BRCA LINK NI	💻 www.brcani.co.uk ✉ info@brcani.co.uk	