

About Hormone Therapy

Hormones, like estrogen, can promote the growth of breast cancer if the cells depend on hormones to grow. Hormone therapy works by preventing cancer cells from getting the hormones they need to grow. The most common hormone therapy for early stage breast cancer is the drug tamoxifen. The most common hormone therapy for postmenopausal women with early stage breast cancer is arimidex, which is part of a newer class of drugs called aromatase inhibitors. Other therapies, such as the suppression or removal of the ovaries, are sometimes used as well.

Answers to these questions will help you understand hormone treatment.

- ? Which hormone treatment are you recommending for me and why?
- ? What does hormone therapy do?
- ? What are the short and long-term side effects of this hormone treatment?
- ? Is there a generic form of this hormone? Is it as effective as the name-brand?

Answers to these questions will help you prepare for the treatment itself.

- ? How soon after surgery should the hormone therapy be started? How long will I be on the therapy?
- ? In what form and how often will the treatment be given?
- ? Will I be given the hormone therapy along with other forms of treatment?
- ? Will my insurance cover the hormone treatment? If not, are there financial assistance programs that will help cover the costs?
- ? Will more tests or exams be required? If so, which tests and how often will they be needed?
- ? What signs and symptoms should I report to you?