

Hormone Therapy for Cancer

Hormones are chemicals made by the body. They help control how certain cells work. Hormone therapy uses hormones or hormone-like medicines to treat some cancers and other conditions. Depending on the type of hormone therapy used, it can stop the body from making a hormone or block a hormone from stimulating the cancer cells.



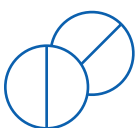
How does hormone therapy work?

Some cancers depend on hormones to grow. Hormone therapy works by blocking or changing hormones to help slow or stop these types of cancer from growing.

Hormone therapy may be the only treatment a person needs, or it might be given along with other treatments like chemo or radiation therapy.

Some of the ways hormone therapy can be used include:

- Before surgery or radiation therapy to shrink the cancer
- After cancer treatment to help reduce the risk that the cancer will come back
- For cancer that comes back after treatment
- For cancer that has spread to other parts of the body



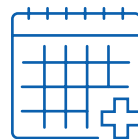
How is it given?

Most of the time, hormone therapy is given by mouth as a pill, capsule, or liquid. Other times, it is given as an injection or shot. Some types of surgery affect hormone levels and can be called hormone therapy, too.



Where do people go to get hormone therapy?

Some types of hormone therapy are taken at home. Others are given in an outpatient clinic or treatment center. If surgery is needed, it may require a hospital stay.



How often is hormone therapy given, and how long does it last?

Because each person's treatment is different, how often hormone therapy is given and how long it lasts can be different, too. It depends on the type of cancer being treated, the type of medicine that's given, and other health problems a person might have. Hormone therapy might be given for weeks, months, or years.



Getting ready for hormone therapy

If hormone therapy is part of your treatment, talk with your cancer care team about what to expect. This will help you plan for changes in your work or family schedule if needed.



Side effects of hormone therapy

Not everyone getting hormone therapy will have side effects. They depend on which treatment is used and the person's overall health. Side effects might include:

- Hot flashes
- Sweating at night
- Feeling tired
- Bone problems
- Less interest in sex
- Decreased ability to have sex
- Vaginal changes
- Breast tenderness or swelling
- Infertility
- Pain in muscles and joints
- Nausea
- Diarrhea
- Weight gain
- Pain
- Mood changes
- Increased risk of other health problems like blood clots, heart disease, and cataracts



Questions to ask

Here are some questions you can ask your doctor and cancer care team:

- What hormone therapy am I getting?
- How often will I get treatment?
- How long will my treatment last?
- Where will I go for my treatment?
- Will my insurance pay for my treatment? How much will I have to pay?
- Will I need other types of treatment?
- What side effects could I have?
- How will my side effects be managed, and what can I do about them?
- Can I keep taking my other medicines or supplements during treatment?
- What can I do to take care of myself during treatment?
- When should I call the doctor or nurse?
- Are there any special things I need to do to protect myself and others while getting treatment?



To learn more about hormone therapy, visit the American Cancer Society website at cancer.org/hormonetherapy or call us at **1-800-227-2345**. We're here when you need us.

