



Greater Midlands Cancer Network

Patient information

Receiving Hormone Injection Therapy for Prostate Cancer

Who is this information for?

For those whose cancer has spread beyond the prostate to nearby glands or bones. This leaflet has been written to help you understand more about the treatment options open to you.

What is hormone injection therapy?

Prostate cancer needs testosterone to grow. Hormone injections stop your testicles producing this hormone. By stopping testosterone from reaching your tumour, your cancer can be treated effectively.

What are the benefits of having hormone injections?

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

How is the treatment given?

The injection is given just under the skin on your stomach and most men do not find the injections too uncomfortable.

Shortly before the first injection you will need to start taking a hormone tablet called Casodex (Bicalutamide) or Cyprostat (Cyproterone Acetate), which is another form of hormone therapy called an anti-androgen. This will usually continue for 2 weeks after the first injection.

The first injection is usually given by one of the Urology Team at the hospital in the Urology Outpatients department. He/she will be able to answer any questions you have. Your GP will then be notified and you will be given any further injections by your GP or practice nurse. Hormone injections are available in two dosages. A low dose injection will need to be given every 4 weeks or a high dose injection will be given every 12 weeks.

You can discuss with your GP whether you want to receive the injection every 4 weeks or every 12 weeks. This is your choice and doesn't alter your treatment outcome. You will need to continue with your injections even if you feel well and you should continue with the injections unless your consultant tells you to stop.

Are there any alternatives to having hormone injections and what would happen if I decided not to have this treatment?

Your consultant will have explained the different treatment options available to you and what would happen if you decided not to have any treatment at all. The choice about which treatment is best for you will be made together with your doctor. This will be based on the risks and benefits of the treatments and your individual circumstances.

Without treatment your cancer may progress and it may be difficult to control any symptoms you have. These are the treatment options open to you;

- Hormone injections, which reduce the testosterone level in your body.
- Surgical removal of the part of the testicles, which produces testosterone called a bilateral orchidectomy.

Both options are equally effective. You should read this leaflet alongside the leaflet entitled 'Patient information for bilateral orchidectomy for prostate cancer' before you make your decision.

What happens if I can't receive my injection exactly 4 weeks or 12 weeks after my previous injection?

You should make every effort to have your injection on the correct date. If you don't think you will be able to make this date (if you are on holiday for example) you should speak to your GP or practice nurse as soon as possible.

Are there any risks or long term effects involved in having hormone injections?

Yes, there are side effects to nearly all treatments. Therefore you must consider the following side effects before deciding to undergo this treatment.

- Hot flushes and night sweats – these are common and may be severe in the first six to 12 months. You may also notice that you have to shave less often.
- Breast swelling and tenderness
- Weight gain
- A reduced sex drive
- Impotence – you will probably experience impotence once you start treatment. This is the inability to achieve an erection.
- Thinning of the bones
- Tiredness

Less common side effects are:

- Joint pain
- Changes in blood pressure
- Skin rashes
- Depression

There may be some treatment that can be given to you if any of these side effects are particularly troublesome. Speak to your GP or consultant or you can contact the Clinical Nurse Specialist on 01782 553820.

Will these injections affect other medication I am taking?

It is unlikely that these injections will affect any other medication you are taking. Your GP will advise you of changes to your medication prescription.

Where can I get further information and support?

Many people living with cancer may 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.

There is also a North Staffs Prostate Cancer Support Group, which is open to anyone affected by prostate cancer. If you wish to speak to someone receiving the same treatment this can be arranged for you either through the support group or your Clinical Nurse Specialist. The local prostate cancer support group meets every third Wednesday of the month at Joiners Square Community Centre, Corns Street, Hanley. The meeting runs between 6pm and 8pm. They would welcome yours and your partners company.

Local sources of further information

Lymes Patient Information Centre

University Hospital of North Staffordshire

Open for drop in sessions:

Monday – Thursday 10am until 12.30pm
and 2pm until 4pm

Tel: 01782 554363. (Answer phone
available out of hours)

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service would be pleased to offer confidential advice and support if you have any concerns. PALS can be contacted on 01782 552814 or Email patient.advice@uhns.nhs.uk

Useful Contacts

The Prostate Cancer Charity
Tel. 0845 300 8383
Email: info@prostate-cancer.org.uk
Website: www.prostate-cancer.org.uk

Prostate Cancer Support Association
Tel. 0845 6010766

Institute of Cancer Research
Tel. 020 7352 8133
Website: www.icr.ac.uk

Cancer Backup Information Service
Freephone 0808 800 1234

The Sexual Dysfunction Association
Tel. 0870 7743571
Website: www.impotence.org.uk

Cancer Help UK
Freephone 0800 226 237
Website: www.cancerhelp.org.uk

