

Tamoxifen (Nolvadex[®])

Tamoxifen is a medicine that blocks the effects of the hormone estrogen in the body. It is known as a selective estrogen receptor modulator (SERM). This medicine is used to treat or help prevent breast cancer.

How Is It Given?

- tablet by mouth.

What Side Effects May Occur?

This is a partial list of the side effects you may have with this medicine. You may have some, all or none of those listed, or you may have other side effects not listed. Most side effects last only a short time.

Common:

- weight gain
- hot flashes
- changes in your menstrual periods
- nausea (upset stomach) and vomiting (throwing up)
- loss of appetite
- bone pain
- tumor pain

Less common:

- blurred vision
- skin rash or dryness
- headache or dizziness
- vaginal discharge or itching
- hair thinning (rare)
- loss of energy or sleepiness
- lowered white blood cell and platelet counts

Special Notes

- Avoid taking antacids within 2 hours of taking tamoxifen.
- You may have a “flare” reaction with bone and tumor pain early on. This won’t last long.
- Some medicines interact with tamoxifen. Let your doctor know if you are taking any of the following:
 - blood thinners such as warfarin (Coumadin[®])
 - birth control pills
 - antidepressants (selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors)
 - bromocriptine (Parlodel[®]).
- Tamoxifen may make you more able to get pregnant. It is important to use some type of birth control while you are taking tamoxifen as it can cause birth defects. Do not use oral contraceptives because they may change the effects of the tamoxifen.

When To Call Your Doctor

You should call your doctor if you have:

- heavy or abnormal vaginal bleeding
- blurred vision
- leg or calf pain, numbness
- shortness of breath.

Ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist if you want more complete medicine information or if you have questions.