megestrol

Generic Name: megestrol (meh JESS trol)
Brand Name: Megace, Megace ES

What is megestrol?
Megestrol is a man-made chemical similar to the female hormone progesterone.

Megestrol is used to treat loss of appetite and weight loss in people with acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS). Megestrol is also used in the treatment of advanced breast cancer and endometrial cancer.

Megestrol may also be used for purposes not listed in this medication guide.

What is the most important information I should know about megestrol?
Megestrol can harm an unborn baby or cause birth defects. Do not use megestrol if you are pregnant. Use birth control to prevent pregnancy.

What should I discuss with my healthcare provider before taking megestrol?
You should not use megestrol if you are allergic to it, or if you are pregnant.

To make sure megestrol is safe for you, tell your doctor if you have:

- diabetes;
- an adrenal gland disorder; or
- a history of stroke or blood clot.

This medication can harm an unborn baby or cause birth defects. Do not use megestrol if you are pregnant. Tell your doctor right away if you become pregnant during treatment. Use effective birth control and follow your doctor's instructions about how long to prevent pregnancy after your treatment ends.

It is not known whether megestrol passes into breast milk or if it could harm a nursing baby. You should not breast-feed while taking megestrol.

How should I take megestrol?
Follow all directions on your prescription label. Do not take this medicine in larger or smaller amounts or for longer than recommended.

Shake the oral suspension (liquid) well just before you measure a dose. Measure the liquid with a special dose-measuring spoon or medicine cup. If you do not have a dose-measuring device, ask your pharmacist for
Megace ES contains a higher concentration of megestrol than Megace. If your doctor changes your brand, strength, or type of megestrol, your dosage needs may change. Ask your pharmacist if you have any questions about the medicine you receive at the pharmacy.

Your dosage needs may change if you have surgery, are ill, are under stress, or have an infection. Do not change your medication dose or schedule without your doctor's advice.

Store at room temperature away from moisture and heat.

What happens if I miss a dose?
Take the missed dose as soon as you remember. Skip the missed dose if it is almost time for your next scheduled dose. Do not take extra medicine to make up the missed dose.

What happens if I overdose?
Seek emergency medical attention or call the Poison Help line at 1-800-222-1222.

What should I avoid while taking megestrol?
This medicine can pass into body fluids (urine, feces, vomit). Caregivers should wear rubber gloves while cleaning up a patient's body fluids, handling contaminated trash or laundry or changing diapers. Wash hands before and after removing gloves. Wash soiled clothing and linens separately from other laundry.

Megestrol side effects
Get emergency medical help if you have signs of an allergic reaction: hives; difficult breathing; swelling of your face, lips, tongue, or throat.

Call your doctor at once if you have any of these side effects during or after your treatment with megestrol:

- weight gain (especially in your waist and upper back), stretch marks;
- thinning skin, easy bruising, increased acne or facial hair;
- menstrual problems, impotence or loss of interest in sex;
- high blood sugar (increased thirst, increased urination, hunger, dry mouth, fruity breath odor, drowsiness, dry skin, blurred vision, weight loss);
- pain, swelling, warmth, or redness (especially in one or both legs); or
- chest pain, sudden cough, wheezing, rapid breathing, coughing up blood,

Common side effects may include:

- nausea, gas, diarrhea;
- unusual vaginal bleeding;
- mild skin rash; or
- weakness.

This is not a complete list of side effects and others may occur. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

See also: Side effects (in more detail)
**Megestrol dosing information**

**Usual Adult Dose for Breast Cancer--Palliative:**

Megestrol tablets are indicated for use in the palliative treatment of advanced carcinoma of the breast: 160 mg/day (40 mg of oral tablets four times a day)

**Usual Adult Dose for Endometrial Carcinoma:**

Megestrol tablets are indicated for use in the palliative treatment of advanced carcinoma of the endometrium: 40 to 320 mg/day of oral tablets in divided doses

**Usual Adult Dose for Anorexia:**

Megestrol oral suspension is indicated for use in the treatment of anorexia at a dose of 800 mg/day.

Alternatively, 625 mg/5 mL of the concentrated formula (Megace ES formula) may be given.

Note: 800 mg/20 mL of the regular formula is equivalent to 625 mg/ 5 mL of the concentrated formula.

**Usual Adult Dose for Cachexia:**

Megestrol oral suspension is indicated for use in the treatment of cachexia at a dose of 800 mg/day.

Alternatively, 625 mg/5 mL of the concentrated formula (Megace ES formula) may be given.

Note: 800 mg/20 mL of the regular formula is equivalent to 625 mg/ 5 mL of the concentrated formula.

**Usual Adult Dose for Weight Loss:**

Megestrol oral suspension is indicated for use in the treatment of unexplained, significant weight loss in patients with a diagnosis of acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) at a dose of 800 mg/day.

Alternatively, 625 mg/5 mL of the concentrated formula (Megace ES formula) may be given.

Note: 800 mg/20 mL of the regular formula is equivalent to 625 mg/ 5 mL of the concentrated formula.

**Usual Adult Dose for Abnormal Uterine Bleeding:**

5 to 10 mg/day for 5 to 10 days

**What other drugs will affect megestrol?**

Tell your doctor about all medicines you use, and those you start or stop using during your treatment with megestrol, especially:

- dofetilide; or
- indinavir.

This list is not complete. Other drugs may interact with megestrol, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal products. Not all possible interactions are listed in this medication guide.

**Where can I get more information?**
Your pharmacist can provide more information about megestrol.

Remember, keep this and all other medicines out of the reach of children, never share your medicines with others, and use this medication only for the indication prescribed.

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