

LONG-ACTING GNRH-ANALOGS

Long-acting GnRH-analogs (Lupron®, Depot-Lupron®, and Synarel®) are drugs used for the treatment of various disorders in gynecology and fertility, including endometriosis, hirsutism, premenstrual syndrome (PMS) and at times, to temporarily reduce the size of uterine fibroids. GnRH-analogs can also be used before starting ovulation with gonadotropins (medicines used for starting ovulation).

GnRH-analogs are man-made forms of naturally occurring hormones GnRH (gonadotropin releasing hormone) produced by the hypothalamus (a region of the brain). GnRH acts on the pituitary to increase the release of FSH and LH (two hormones that lead to ovulation and estrogen production by the ovary).

GnRH-analogs overemphasize the action of GnRH. They suppress the production of LH and FSH by the pituitary gland. This results in decreased levels of estrogen. It prevents ovulation and produces a pseudo or false menopause. This false menopause can be reversed when the medication is stopped. Most women on GnRH-analog therapy do not have menstrual bleeding. Some may also complain of irregular spotting. Long-term use (more than six months) could increase the risk of calcium loss from bones. To decrease bone loss you should take at least 1500 mg of elemental calcium every day.

Dosage

The amount of doses depends on the type of GnRH-analog prescribed by the physician. In all cases, therapy should begin within a few days after your period starts. Therapy usually lasts from two to six months. Lupron may be taken as a daily injection. It is given under the skin usually before the start of ovulation.

Depot-Lupron is taken once a month (3.75 mg dose). It can also be taken every three months (11.25 mg a dose). Synarel spray is taken as a nasal spray twice daily. You should change nostrils with each use.

Side Effects

GnRH-analogs are not birth control methods. You should avoid pregnancy while on this medication. Use a barrier birth control method, such as condoms and spermicidal foam or gel. You can also use a diaphragm and spermicidal foam or gel.

Many of the side effects of GnRH-analogs are due to the pseudo-menopausal state and can include, hot flashes, dry skin, vaginal dryness and mood swings. Individuals should not be alarmed. Severe side effects are rare. You should notify your physician if you have severe or constant headaches and worsening depression. Please report any reaction that you are not expecting.

For More Information

For more information about Long-Acting GnRH-Analogs or for an appointment, please contact:

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