

Androgen Deprivation Therapy (ADT)

What You Should Know



The prostate is a small, walnut-sized gland in the pelvis of men. It is next to the bladder. Prostate cancer is a form of cancer that grows in the prostate gland. It is the most common cancer in U.S. men and the second leading cause of cancer death for men in the U.S.

There are many treatment options for prostate cancer. These may involve active surveillance, surgery, radiation, hormones (Androgen Deprivation Therapy or ADT), chemotherapy and immunotherapy.

Prostate cancer cells use the hormone testosterone to grow but testosterone can be lowered through hormone therapy or ADT

What is Hormonal Therapy or Androgen Deprivation Therapy (ADT)?

Prostate cancer cells use the hormone testosterone to grow. In other words, testosterone can act as food for prostate cancer, helping the cancer grow. Testosterone can be lowered through surgery or hormonal therapy, also known as androgen deprivation therapy (ADT). This therapy uses drugs to block or lower testosterone and other male sex hormones that fuel cancer. ADT works by starving prostate cancer cells of testosterone. ADT is used to slow cancer growth in cancers that are advanced or have come back after initial local aggressive therapy. It is also used for a short time during and after radiation therapy for patients with localized disease.

Who Should Receive ADT?

ADT is given to men with prostate cancer that has spread

beyond the prostate or for prostate cancer that is in advanced stages. Studies suggest men live longer if they start ADT after prostate cancer has spread to lymph nodes, the bones or other tissues. ADT is also recommended for some men with localized cancer who choose treatment with radiation. ADT offers great benefit for patients, both with localized and advanced disease. It is often well tolerated.

How is ADT Given?

Testosterone can be lowered through surgery (orchiectomy) or with drugs known as hormone therapy or ADT. ADT can be given as an injection (shot) by a member of your urology team in a urology clinic or can be taken as a daily pill.

Surgery (orchiectomy): Removes the testicles, which make most of the body's testosterone. The procedure is done on an outpatient basis, and most patients return home on the same day. The patient should be able to return to work and activities within one week.

Drugs: There are many possible drugs that may be used for ADT. The two main types affect luteinizing hormone releasing hormone (LH-RH) and are called LHRH agonists or antagonists. They stop the body's natural ability to make testosterone. Another type of hormonal therapy is called antiandrogens and is often given together with ADT. These pills block testosterone.

These therapies have been used for many years and are often offered as the first option for men who have advanced prostate cancer. For some patients, ADT can be given for short periods of time and then stopped for a while before being restarted. For other patients, it is recommended that ADT is continued forever. Hormone therapy usually works for a while (maybe for years) until the cancer "learns" how to bypass this treatment. It is best to talk to your doctor about further options at this stage.



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Benefits, Risks and Side Effects of ADT

The most common side effects of ADT include hot flashes, fatigue and loss of sex drive. Some patients may have loss of lean muscle mass and an increase in fat. For patients who are able to stop ADT, these side effects often go away. Some patients, mostly those who are elderly, may have a cognitive decline. ADT has also been linked to heart disease, diabetes and loss of bone (osteoporosis). Your doctor may suggest a bone density scan every other year to see if your bones are thinning. In some cases, men on ADT are given calcium, vitamin D and other drugs to prevent osteoporosis-induced fractures. You should talk about these risks with your doctor before you start treatment.

It is of great value to talk with your doctor if you have any side effects. Doctors often have ways to help reduce side effects related to your prostate cancer treatment.

About the Urology Care Foundation

The Urology Care Foundation is the world's leading urologic foundation – and the official foundation of the American Urological Association. We provide information for those actively managing their urologic health and those ready to make health changes. Our information is based on the American Urological Association resources and is reviewed by medical experts. To learn more, visit the Urology Care Foundation's website, **UrologyHealth.org/UrologicConditions** or go to **UrologyHealth.org/FindAUrologist** to find a doctor near you.

Disclaimer

This information is not a tool for self-diagnosis or a substitute for professional medical advice. It is not to be used or relied on for that purpose. Please talk to your urologist or health care provider about your health concerns. Always talk to a health care provider before you start or stop any treatments, including medications. For more information, visit **UrologyHealth.org/Download** or call 800-828-7866.

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