

**If you need any further assistance or information please contact:**

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***PATIENT  
INFORMATION***

**Managing the Complications of Hormonal  
Therapy (Males)**

Radiotherapy information for Torbay Hospital patients

Prostate cancer requires the presence of the hormone testosterone to grow and therefore patients are prescribed medication to stop testosterone acting on the prostate cancer.

A lack of testosterone can cause hot flushes similar to menopause in women.

The other effects of a lack of testosterone are aches and pains in the joints, a reduction in muscle tone and gynaecomastia (growth/tenderness in breasts).

### **Hot Flushes**

#### **Lifestyle Changes**

It is difficult to make much impact by changing lifestyle, although some patients do find that alcohol and spicy foods make them worse.

#### **Herbal remedies/acupuncture**

There are a wide range of herbal remedies claiming to relieve hot flushes and in a number of cases this will be true. However, until we have a better understanding we can not recommend them for the treatment of hot flushes.

There is some evidence that acupuncture may be of benefit.

#### **Medication**

The medications for hot flushes that have been studied include the hormones progesterone and oestrogen, (Diethylstilboestrol, Cyproterone Acetate or Megestrol Acetate, Clonidine and oestrogen patches). The severity and frequency of hot flushes can improve spontaneously over time.

### **Recommendations**

Progesterones (Cyproterone Acetate or Megestrol Acetate) are recommended for the management of troublesome hot flushes. If medication is used, it should be given for 2 weeks, and can be re-started, if effective, as required.

### **Gynaecomastia**

Gynaecomastia is a common, troublesome complication of long-term Bicalutamide (Casodex). Trials have studied the uses of Tamoxifen and of prophylactic radiotherapy to the breast buds. Although Tamoxifen was shown to be an effective, there is a theoretical concern that, as an anti-oestrogen, it could have an adverse effect on prostate cancer control.

Men starting long-term Bicalutamide (>6 months), should receive radiotherapy to both breast buds within the first month of treatment.

If radiotherapy is unsuccessful in preventing gynaecomastia, weekly Tamoxifen should be considered.

Regular weight bearing exercise (e.g. walking) reduces fatigue and improves the quality of life.

### **Liver Function**

Casodex can affect the liver, therefore a liver function blood test should be done prior to starting on casodex and at each follow up visit.