

## Nolvadex<sup>®</sup> (tamoxifen)

**Nolvadex<sup>®</sup>** is a drug used to prevent the recurrence of breast cancer. Tamoxifen is a non-steroidal, anti-estrogen drug that has been used to treat cancer since the early 1970s. The drug blocks estrogen stimulation on breast tissue in the body and is referred to as an anti-estrogen therapy.

Nolvadex<sup>®</sup> enters the blood stream and is carried to the organs that have estrogen hormone receptors. Receptor sites on cells are similar to a lock and the tamoxifen is like the key that fits the lock. There the drug attaches to the receptor site and prevents estrogen from attaching. The cell is prevented from dividing, thus controlling the cancer that may be left in the body. Nolvadex<sup>®</sup> targets only estrogen cell receptor sites and seems to prevent many problems that the lack of estrogen causes post-menopausal women.

### **Nolvadex<sup>®</sup> After Breast Cancer**

Studies have proven that tamoxifen is effective in reducing recurrence in breast cancer patients. After reviewing your pathology report, the oncologist can determine if you are a candidate for hormonal manipulation. If the estrogen receptor status is found to be positive, it will indicate that your tumor may respond to this therapy. Nolvadex<sup>®</sup> is the drug most commonly prescribed.

Clinical studies show the number of bone fractures of the hip, wrist, and spine were reduced in the Nolvadex<sup>®</sup> group. However, an increase was seen in the number of endometrial cells (lining the uterus) causing cancers and an increase in bloodclots. As with any medical intervention, the decision to take Nolvadex<sup>®</sup> is an individual one that should be made in partnership with your physician, evaluating the benefits and risks. The decision depends on a woman's age, personal history, family history of cancer, and how she feels about the benefits versus the risks.

### **Nolvadex<sup>®</sup> Administration**

The drug is taken by mouth twice daily. The side effects of Nolvadex<sup>®</sup> are similar to menopausal symptoms including hot flashes, vaginal dryness, fluid retention, and vaginal spotting. Some women report nausea the first several weeks after beginning the drug. Taking the drug with food can help this. These symptoms, though annoying, are usually easily tolerated when one realizes the role the drug plays in preventing recurrence.