

Short-Term Hormone Therapy Is Equally Effective for High-Risk Prostate Cancer as Longer-Term Therapy

In a new study, researchers found that patients with high-risk prostate cancer who received hormone therapy for 18 months lived as long as patients who received hormone therapy for 36 months. Androgens (male sex hormones), such as testosterone, help prostate cancer grow. Hormone therapy, also called androgen blockade therapy or androgen deprivation therapy, slows the growth of prostate cancer by lowering the levels of androgens or blocking the androgens from getting to the prostate cancer cell. It is a standard treatment for prostate cancer. However, long-term hormone therapy causes many side effects, such as hot flashes, loss of libido (sex drive), erectile dysfunction, weight gain, loss of bone density and muscle mass, and depression that worsen during the length of treatment. With this study, researchers hoped that a shorter course of hormone therapy would help treat the cancer equally well while reducing the side effects.

This study included 630 patients with high-risk prostate cancer that had not spread to nearby lymph nodes (tiny, bean-shaped organs that help fight disease) who received hormone therapy for either 18 months or 36 months. Researchers found that the shorter length of hormone therapy did not increase the risk of dying from prostate cancer, with almost 13% of men who received both treatment schedules dying of prostate cancer within 10 years. Overall, 92% of men who received the longer 36 month treatment schedule were alive after five years, and nearly 64% were alive after 10 years. For those who received the shorter 18 month schedule, nearly 87% lived at least five years, and 63% lived at least 10 years.

What this means for patients

“Shorter-term hormone therapy could have a big impact on the lives of men with prostate cancer, reducing the quantity and intensity of its unpleasant side effects as well as treatment costs,” said lead author Abdenour Nabid, MD, FRCP(C), Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians of Canada and Associate Professor at Centre Hospitalier Universitaire de Sherbrooke in Sherbrooke, Canada. “We hope these results will convince doctors that they can stop hormone therapy after one and a half years instead of two to three years.” It’s important to talk with your doctor about your diagnosis, as treatment options and the length of treatment often depend on many factors. In addition, ask about how the health care team can help manage the side effects of treatment.

Questions to Ask Your Doctor

- What stage of prostate cancer do I have? What does this mean?
- What are my treatment options?
- Will I be receiving hormone therapy? For how long?
- What are the side effects of hormone therapy? How can they be managed?

For More Information

[Guide to Prostate Cancer](#) [1]

[Hormone Deprivation Symptoms](#) [2]

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Links:

[1] <http://www.cancer.net/node/19562>

[2] <http://www.cancer.net/node/25254>