



Fertility Medications and Side Effects

GnRH Agonist (Synarel, Buserelin, Lupron) These medications prevent premature ovulation by suppressing hormone secretion from the pituitary gland. The suppression usually occurs **within two to three weeks** after starting the medication. The agonist must be continued until the day of hCG. Side effects are uncommon but may include symptoms of menopause, such as: headaches, hot flushes and decreased sex drive. Some rash, redness, local stinging and swelling may occur at the injection site. Buserelin and Lupron are given by injection, while Synarel is a nasal spray.

GnRH Antagonist (Orgalutron, Cetrotide) These medications prevent premature ovulation by suppressing pituitary hormone secretion. Suppression occurs rapidly, **within two hours** of injection. Antagonists are given by subcutaneous injection during the last few days of FSH stimulation. Side effects may include headaches, injection site bruising, itching, swelling or redness, and nausea.

FSH or hMG – follicle stimulating hormone or human menopausal gonadotropin (Gonal F, Puregon, Repronex, Bravelle, Luveris, and Menopur) These hormones are normally produced by the pituitary gland. They cause growth of the follicles and maturation of the eggs within them. They are given by subcutaneous injection (under the skin). Side effects may include irritation at the injection site and exaggerated menstrual symptoms such as cramping, backache, mood swings and headaches. Abdominal distention or ovarian hyper stimulation occurs in less than 1% of patients.

hCG – human chorionic gonadotropin (Pregnyl, PPC, Ovidrel) This is a natural hormone that causes the final maturation of the eggs within the follicles and synchronizes them for the retrieval process. hCG is injected into the tissue under the skin. The egg retrieval is performed 34–36 hours later. They carry the same side effects as the FSH or hMG hormones.

Progesterone (Prometrium, Endometrin, Crinone) Progesterone is normally produced by the collapsed follicle after ovulation occurs. It is responsible for preparing the endometrium (lining of the uterus) for the implantation of the embryo. Your own production of progesterone is supplemented by additional natural progesterone. Progesterone can be taken orally or vaginally. Side effects tend to be similar to premenstrual symptoms such as tiredness, bloating, constipation and breast tenderness. Prometrium is a **peanut-based** preparation: therefore, a peanut allergy is a contraindication to using this preparation. In this case, alternative medications are available.

If you are concerned about any of the side effects you are experiencing, please speak to a nurse.

Where to buy medications:

Medications can be purchased from Kelowna Regional Fertility Centre five days a week during business hours.

Monday – Friday 8:30 – 4:30 Saturday – Sunday by appointment only

Although you may purchase your medications from local pharmacies, they may require 2–5 days notice and the costs may be higher due to dispensing fees. The Kelowna Regional Fertility Centre does not charge dispensing fees.