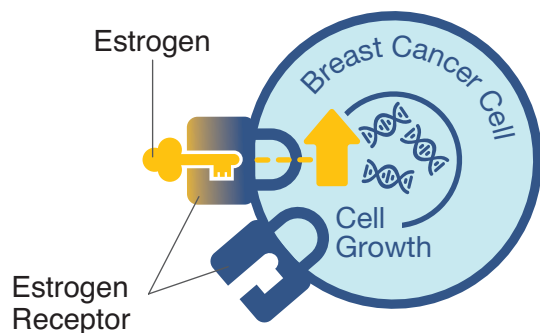


## 7. How does this medication work?

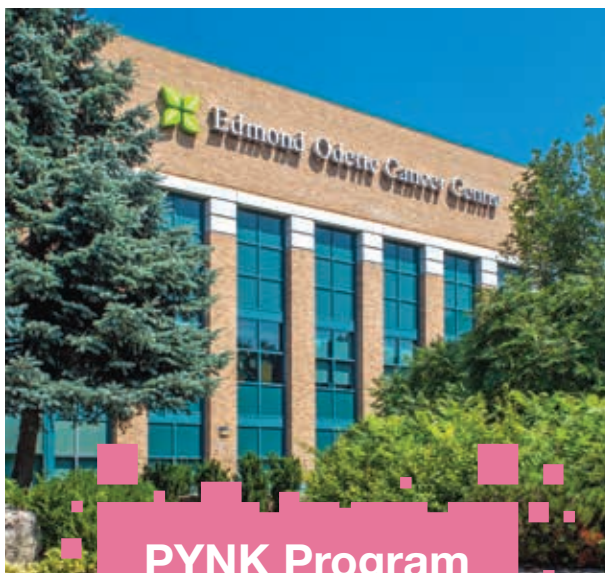
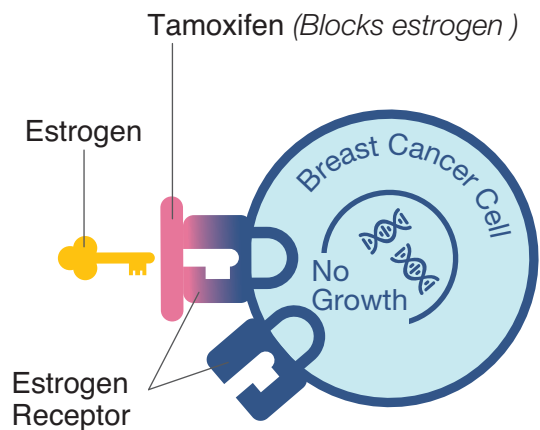
Approximately 80% of breast cancers have estrogen receptors (ER) on the cancer cells. These ER+ cancers are fed by the female hormone **estrogen**, which attaches to the ER.

Tamoxifen blocks estrogen from attaching to ER+ breast cancer cells, which can stop the cancer from growing.

### No Tamoxifen:



### With Tamoxifen:



## PYNK Program

For more information, visit:

**Odette Cancer Centre**  
2075 Bayview Avenue  
Toronto, Ontario M4N 3M5

[sunnybrook.ca/pynk/medications](http://sunnybrook.ca/pynk/medications)

The information presented in this brochure illustrates general concepts and provides an overview of common side effects; however, some rare events may have been excluded. For more information, speak with a member of your oncology team, or consult Cancer Care Ontario's website.

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 **Sunnybrook**  
HEALTH SCIENCES CENTRE  
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# Tamoxifen

# DRAFT

LAI D OUT BY: KITT  
REVISED: 2020/08/10



**Sunnybrook**  
ODETTE CANCER CENTRE

## 1. Why am I being prescribed tamoxifen?

To try to:

- Stop a new estrogen receptor positive (ER+) breast cancer from developing OR
- Stop your ER+ breast cancer from returning OR
- Shrink your ER+ breast cancer and stop it from spreading to other parts of the body.

## 2. How do I take this medication?

Take a pill of tamoxifen once a day with or without food.

If you miss a pill do not take two the next day.

## 3. What are common side effects of tamoxifen and how can I manage them?

### Hot flashes

- Flushing of the face, sweating, and feeling warm can occur.
- Wear light clothes and avoid alcohol, caffeine, and sugar to reduce symptoms.
- Exercise can help reduce symptoms.

### Vaginal dryness or discharge

- Vaginal moisturizers can help prevent and treat vaginal dryness.
- Lubricants make you more comfortable during sex.

## 4. What are rare side effects of tamoxifen and how do I monitor for them?

### Small risk of blood clots

Tell your nurse or doctor if you get:

- A new swollen, red, or painful leg.
- Shortness of breath, coughing up blood, or chest pain.

These may be symptoms of a blood clot in the leg or lungs.

### Small risk of uterine cancer

Women who have stopped their menstrual periods and take tamoxifen are at slightly higher risk of getting cancer of the uterine lining.

Call your nurse or doctor if you get new vaginal spotting or bleeding while on this medication.

### Birth defects

Tamoxifen can cause birth defects and women should not become pregnant while taking this medication.

## 5. Can I take this medication with other medications or natural health products?

Some anti-depressants may have an effect on how tamoxifen works. Some natural health products have estrogen and should not be used while taking tamoxifen.

Speak with a pharmacist and/or your doctor before you take other prescription medications, supplements, or natural health products.

## 6. What should I do if I feel unwell on this medication?

Severe side effects are rare with tamoxifen. If you are worried that your symptoms might be caused by this medication, stop taking it and tell your nurse or doctor right away.



For more information and answers to other questions visit:  
[sunnybrook.ca/pynk/medications](https://sunnybrook.ca/pynk/medications)

If your symptoms are caused by tamoxifen, another medication can be prescribed.

LAI D OUT BY: KITTY CHOI  
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