



## MEGACE (MEGESTROL ACETATE)

### Summary

Megace is used as a treatment for weight loss. It can improve appetite and help people gain weight. Most of the weight is gained as fat, not muscle. A single dose of 10-20 ml liquid, containing 400-800 mg Megace, is taken daily.

### What is Megace?

Megestrol acetate, sold under the brand name Megace, is a synthetic version of the hormone *progesterone*. It has been available for many years as a palliative treatment for some advanced cancers. About ten years ago, researchers observed that women receiving Megace as a treatment for breast cancer gained weight. A number of clinical trials were run and Megace was subsequently approved to promote appetite and weight gain in people with cancer or AIDS-related weight loss.

### How is it used?

Megace may be used to treat unexplained weight loss or loss of appetite in HIV-positive people, although it is not clear exactly how this drug works.

Von Roenn and Oster each conducted large placebo-controlled studies of Megace in HIV-positive men who had lost at least 10% of their normal body weight. After 12 weeks of study, both trials showed that those who had received 800 mg Megace daily gained weight (an average of 3.54 kg in Von Roenn's study and 4.16 kg in Oster's). It is important to note that most of the weight gained was fat, rather than lean body mass (muscle). In addition to the increase in weight, participants

who received Megace reported an improved sense of well-being.

### Dosage

The recommended daily dose of Megace is 400 to 800 mg in liquid suspension. Megace is available in tablets but it would take 20 pills a day to get the recommended dose.

### Side effects

The most common side effects reported in clinical trials of Megace were diarrhea, rash, high blood pressure, insomnia, and nausea.

Megace is a hormonal drug that may affect men and women differently. Women may experience changes in their menstrual periods, including unpredictable bleeding. Men may experience impotence (erectile dysfunction)

### Drug interactions

Interactions of other drugs with Megace have not been studied. Rifampin may decrease blood levels of Megace, thus reducing its effects.

### Availability

Megace is a prescription drug approved for sale in Canada.



## Credits

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## References

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