



CEDARS-SINAI MEDICAL CENTER.

BROMOCRIPTINE (PARLODEL®) AND CABERGOLINE (DOSTINEX®)

Some patients experience extra production of prolactin. This is called *hyperprolactinemia*. Prolactin is a hormone made by the pituitary. The pituitary is a small gland sitting behind the eyes. It is located at the base of the brain. It is usually involved in the production of milk during breast feeding. When prolactin levels are higher than normal, there may be difficulty with releasing eggs in the ovary. This may result in poor ovulation and periods that may not be regular. It can also result in absent periods. Additionally, many women with high prolactin levels will produce milk from one or both breasts. This is called galactorrhea.

The causes of higher prolactin levels vary. Some causes may be certain drugs, thyroid disorders, and benign tumors of the pituitary. Tumors are called prolactinomas. If they are small, they are called microadenomas. Adenomas if they are larger. After the cause has been found, your doctor may give you medication. The medication will decrease the production of prolactin. The medication may also decrease the size of the pituitary tumor (if you have one). They include bromocriptine (Parlodel®) and cabergoline (Dostinex®). If you are trying to get pregnant, these drugs may also act to improve your fertility by helping ovulation.

DOSAGE:

Bromocriptine (Parlodel®) is available in 5 mg tablets. The dose that you need may vary depending upon the reason why prolactin level is high. It can also depend upon the amount of elevation. Generally, the dosage starts at 1/2 tablet twice a day. It is then increased weekly to a specific maintenance dose. This dose is taken on a daily basis.

Cabergoline (Dostinex®) is available in 0.5 mg tablets. The suggested first dose is 0.5mg per week. It may be administered as a single dose, or in 2 or more smaller doses. The dose should be increased gradually. If at all possible, increase by 0.5mg/week every month. This continues until the best favorable response is reached. This is also called the therapeutic dosage. The therapeutic dosage is usually 1mg/week (range 0.25mg to 2mg).

Bromocriptine and cabergoline should be taken with food. Regular blood levels of prolactin will be taken to study your reaction to the medicine. The medication should be stopped as soon as you become pregnant. You may be asked to keep a temperature chart while you are taking the medication. No birth defects have been reported in women who continued to take Parlodel® or Dostinex® while pregnant.

RISKS AND SIDE EFFECTS:

You should remember that these medicines might bring back your ovulation. They may increase your chances of becoming pregnant. If you do not wish to get pregnant, you should use a reliable form of birth control.

Side-effects of these medicines are generally not serious. The side effects improve with lower dosages and time. They include nausea and vomiting. Dizziness, faintness, and nasal congestion may also be felt. Side effects are usually less with cabergoline than with



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bromocriptine. Note that approximately 2% of patients faint when taking their first dose of Parlodel®. You should be prepared for this.

If you experience significant or constant dizziness, fainting, weakness, or vomiting, please call your nurse or doctor at (310) 423-9967.