

# Arizona Reproductive Medicine Specialists

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<b>Lupron (Leuprolide acetate)</b>	
<b>Description</b>	Lupron is the trade name for leuprolide acetate, which is a GnRH agonist. GnRH (gonadotropin release hormone) is secreted by a specialized area of the brain (hypothalamus), the hormone signals the pituitary to release its substances (FSH & LH) which then stimulate the ovary to release the female hormone estrogen and progesterone which effect ovulation. With the administration of Lupron, the hypothalamus is blocked and no significant messages reach the ovary. Depo Lupron is given by injection on a monthly basis while Lupron is given on a daily basis. The physician will discuss which medication is appropriate for use. When a woman is taking this medicine, she does not secrete significant amounts of FSH, LH estrogen or progesterone.
<b>Indications</b>	This medication is currently approved by the FDA to treat prostatic cancer and endometriosis. Its mechanism of action is about the same in the male as the female, however in the male, none of the predominant male hormone (testosterone) is produced and the lack of this hormone is thought to benefit patients with certain cancers. Lupron is currently being used in the United States under the direction of Reproductive Endocrinologists to treat patients with endometriosis, uterine leiomyomata (fibroids), and polycystic ovary disease and as part of an ovulation induction protocol.
<b>Side Effects</b>	Because patients are estrogen deficient, after taking Lupron therapy for a period of time, a menopause-like state is induced and many of the side effects include, but are not limited to: hot flashes, occasional insomnia, vaginal dryness and emotional instability. Mild joint stiffness or muscle aches are uncommon, but have been reported. No significant changes in weight have been identified and this hormone does not produce any increased body hair.
<b>Results</b>	Lupron has been reported as being successful in controlling the symptoms of women who have endometriosis in a majority of cases. Complete eradication of endometriosis is difficult and in patients with severe endometriosis, a combination of medicine and surgery are often needed. After Lupron therapy, uterine myomas have been known to shrink about 70% in size, making them more amenable to a surgical approach. However, when the medicine is stopped, the myomas usually return to their original size after several months.
<b>Cost</b>	Because the GnRH analogs are relatively new, and have undergone considerable study, manufacturing costs are extremely high. You should check with your pharmacist, as well as your insurance company regarding coverage of this medication.