

What are Progesterone Pessaries?

Pessaries can simply be described as vaginal suppositories. They are shaped to fit easily and comfortably into the vagina. Progesterone pessaries are available in strengths of 100mg or 200mg in a hard fat base.

What is Progesterone used for?

Natural progesterone is still advocated for use in a wide range of medical interventions, in the treatment of gynaecological or other hormonal disorders. Examples range from contraception or preparing a receptive endometrium for transfer of embryos, to use in post-menopausal women.

Can progesterone pessaries be used rectally?

Yes, a progesterone pessary can be used rectally. This is sometimes necessary if there is an infection of the vagina or barrier forms of contraception are being used.

Is there any difference in progesterone levels when progesterone pessaries are used vaginally or rectally?

No, the same amount of progesterone is available for use by the body, for the same dose, whether it has been administered vaginally or rectally^{(1) (3)}.

Why use the vaginal or rectal routes of administration?

The vaginal and rectal route of administration of progesterone allows for more efficient absorption of progesterone and less side effects than taking progesterone by mouth. Progesterone is rapidly absorbed from the vagina or rectum. More of the progesterone dose is available for use, by the body, for a longer period of time, than when taken orally.

Intramuscular (IM) routes of administration of progesterone are also rapidly absorbed, and have good availability. The IM route can cause localised irritation, pain or discomfort and requires daily administration to maintain appropriate progesterone levels⁽²⁾. Localised irritation, discomfort or systemic side effects are rarely seen with vaginally or rectally administered progesterone, however, daily insertion of a pessary can be still required.

How long before a dose will act?

Rapid absorption and rise in progesterone levels are attained in the first four hours after administration when, rectal or vaginal routes are used. Maximum levels are reached after about eight hours^{(1) (3)}.

How long does a dose last?

In most patients the levels of progesterone in the blood return to pre dose levels after 24 hours^{(1) (3)}.

Dose Comparison between formulations

Similar serum levels of progesterone or effect will be achieved by each formulation in the following dosage amounts:

20mg to 25mg progesterone (IM) has the same effect as
100mg progesterone (vaginal/rectal pessary) or
5 to 10mg medroxyprogesterone (oral)⁽⁴⁾.

References

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