

How to take an Oral Bisphosphonate Medication

Alendronic Acid or Risedronate sodium

You have been prescribed this medication because you have Osteoporosis/fragile bones. Bisphosphonates work by inhibiting bone resorption (loss) therefore increasing bone density (thickness). The medication if taken correctly will improve the strength of your bones. The treatment is usually long term but we recommend it be reviewed at 5 years by your GP.

Bisphosphonates are poorly absorbed and any food in the stomach will reduce the amount you absorb. If taken **incorrectly** this Drug can cause complications or damage to the Oesophagus (food pipe). Not following the advised method for taking the drug or missing doses will reduce its effectiveness. **Always ensure you read the leaflet that comes in the box with your medication.**

Important information

- **Take your weekly Bisphosphonate on the same day of each week.**
- **Take first thing in the morning on an empty stomach.**
- **Swallow whole with at least 200ml of water. (only water).**
- **Sit upright or stand for at least 30 minutes, to allow the tablet to stay in the stomach.**

Do Not

- Chew Crush or Suck the tablet.
- Eat or drink anything else for 30 minutes.
- Take at the same time as other medications, wait 30 minutes before taking other medications.
- Do not take a Calcium Supplement the morning you take your Bisphosphonate medication. Wait at least 4 hours or miss (OMIT) that morning dose of Calcium.

What are the side effects?

Everyone reacts differently; this is a list of the more common side effects and what to do:

- Heartburn, inflammation of food pipe (Oesophagus). Check you are following guidelines on how to take medication – if persistent seek advice from your GP.
- Bone, joint or muscle pain, can be an initial response to medication and may settle as your body adjusts- if concerned seek advice from your GP.
- Diarrhoea/abdominal discomfort - seek advice from your GP if persistent or severe.
- Constipation/Flatulence, this can at times be caused by Calcium supplements – contact your GP who can adjust the dose.
- Eye Inflammation/ pain or disturbed vision (Uveitis and Scleritis) – seek advice from your GP.
- Mild Headache – if persistent contact your GP.

Are there any rare complications?

Everyone reacts differently; this is a list of very uncommon complications and what to do:

- Atypical femoral fractures – report any thigh, hip or groin pain to your GP.
- Osteonecrosis of the external auditory canal – report any ear pain or ear discharge to your GP.
- Osteonecrosis of the jaw – maintain good oral hygiene, receive regular dental check-ups, inform your Dentist of your medication and report any oral symptoms to your GP/Dentist.

Always keep out of the reach of children

Sources of information

This guidance was produced following advice from:

NICE quality Standards 2017 www.nice.org.uk

British National Formulary 2017 www.nice.org.uk/guidance/qs149

National Osteoporosis Society 2016 www.nos.org.uk

Your comments

We are always interested to hear your views about our leaflets. If you have any comments, please contact the Patient Experience Team – Tel: (01323) 417400 Ext: 5860 or by email at: esh-tr.patientexperience@nhs.net

Hand hygiene

The trust is committed to maintaining a clean, safe environment. Hand hygiene is very important in controlling infection. Alcohol gel is widely available at the patient bedside for staff use and at the entrance of each clinical area for visitors to clean their hands before and after entering.

Other formats

If you require any of the Trust leaflets in alternative formats, such as large print or alternative languages, please contact the Equality and Human Rights Department. Tel: (01424) 755255 Ext: 2620

After reading this information are there any questions you would like to ask? Please list below and ask your Fracture Liaison Nurse or GP

For advice or information contact: Fracture Liaison or your GP.

Fracture Liaison Specialist Nurse

Hastings and Rother – Conquest Hospital

Eastbourne, Hailsham and Seaford - Eastbourne DGH

Email: ESHT.fractureliaisonservice@nhs.net

Tel: (01424) 757580

Tel: (01323) 413887

Reference

The following clinicians have been consulted and agreed this patient information:
Dr S Panthakalam.

The Clinical Specialty/Unit that have agreed this patient information leaflet:
Fracture Liaison Service, Rheumatology. Telephone 01424 755255 ext

Next review date: August 2018.

Responsible clinician/author: S Goldup, Fracture Liaison Specialist Nurse.

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