



## PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# Etidronate

This information from Lexicomp® explains what you need to know about this medication, including what it's used for, how to take it, its side effects, and when to call your healthcare provider.

### **Brand Names: Canada**

ACT Etidronate [DSC]; CO Etidronate [DSC]

### **What is this drug used for?**

- It is used to treat Paget's disease.
- It is used to help control calcium levels in certain people.
- It may be given to you for other reasons. Talk with the doctor.

### **What do I need to tell my doctor BEFORE I take this drug?**

- If you are allergic to this drug; any part of this drug; or any other drugs, foods, or substances. Tell your doctor about the allergy and what signs you had.
- If you have any of these health problems: An

esophagus that is not normal, low calcium levels, soft bones (osteomalacia), or trouble swallowing.

- If you are not able to stand or sit up for 30 minutes.

This is not a list of all drugs or health problems that interact with this drug.

Tell your doctor and pharmacist about all of your drugs (prescription or OTC, natural products, vitamins) and health problems. You must check to make sure that it is safe for you to take this drug with all of your drugs and health problems. Do not start, stop, or change the dose of any drug without checking with your doctor.

## **What are some things I need to know or do while I take this drug?**

### **For all uses of this drug:**

- Tell all of your health care providers that you take this drug. This includes your doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- Do not take this drug for longer than you were told by your doctor.
- Have a bone density test as you have been told by your doctor. Talk with your doctor.
- Have blood work checked as you have been told by the doctor. Talk with the doctor.

- This drug may affect certain lab tests. Tell all of your health care providers and lab workers that you take this drug.
- Have a dental exam before starting this drug.
- Take good care of your teeth. See a dentist often.
- Talk with your doctor before you drink alcohol.
- If you smoke, talk with your doctor.
- Severe esophagus problems like irritation, swelling, ulcers, and bleeding have happened with this drug. Talk with the doctor.
- Worsening of asthma has happened in people taking drugs like this one. Talk with the doctor.
- This drug may raise the chance of a broken leg. Talk with the doctor.
- Tell your doctor if you are pregnant, plan on getting pregnant, or are breast-feeding. You will need to talk about the benefits and risks to you and the baby.

### **For Paget's disease:**

- Take calcium and vitamin D as you were told by your doctor.

## **What are some side effects that I need to call my doctor about right away?**

**WARNING/CAUTION:** Even though it may be rare, some people may have very bad and sometimes deadly side effects when taking a drug. Tell your doctor or get medical help right away if you have any of the following signs or symptoms that may be related to a very bad side effect:

- Signs of an allergic reaction, like rash; hives; itching; red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin with or without fever; wheezing; tightness in the chest or throat; trouble breathing, swallowing, or talking; unusual hoarseness; or swelling of the mouth, face, lips, tongue, or throat.
- Black, tarry, or bloody stools.
- Chest pain.
- Throwing up blood or throw up that looks like coffee grounds.
- Severe stomach pain.
- Heartburn.
- Trouble swallowing.
- Very bad pain when swallowing.
- Very bad bone, joint, or muscle pain.

- Any new or strange groin, hip, or thigh pain.
- Change in eyesight.
- Fever, chills, or sore throat.
- Any unexplained bruising or bleeding.
- This drug may cause jawbone problems. The risk may be higher with longer use, cancer, dental problems, ill-fitting dentures, anemia, blood clotting problems, or infection. It may also be higher if you have dental work, chemo, radiation, or take other drugs that may cause jawbone problems. Many drugs can do this. Talk with your doctor if any of these apply to you, or if you have questions. Call your doctor right away if you have jaw swelling or pain.

### **What are some other side effects of this drug?**

All drugs may cause side effects. However, many people have no side effects or only have minor side effects. Call your doctor or get medical help if any of these side effects or any other side effects bother you or do not go away:

- Upset stomach.
- Diarrhea.

These are not all of the side effects that may occur. If you have questions about side effects, call your doctor.

Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects.

You may report side effects to your national health agency.

You may report side effects to the FDA at 1-800-332-1088. You may also report side effects at <https://www.fda.gov/medwatch>.

### **How is this drug best taken?**

Use this drug as ordered by your doctor. Read all information given to you. Follow all instructions closely.

- Take on an empty stomach. Take at least 2 hours before or 2 hours after a meal.
- Swallow whole. Do not chew, break, or crush.
- Take with a full glass of water.
- Take with plain water only. Avoid taking with mineral water, milk, or other drinks.
- Do not eat or drink dairy products or take iron; vitamins with minerals; or products that have aluminum, calcium, or magnesium in them like some antacids within 2 hours before or 2 hours after this drug.
- Do not lie down after taking this drug. This will help lower the chance of throat irritation. Ask your

pharmacist how long before you can lie down after taking this drug.

- Keep taking this drug as you have been told by your doctor or other health care provider, even if you feel well.

### **What do I do if I miss a dose?**

- Take a missed dose as soon as you think about it.
- If it is close to the time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your normal time.
- Do not take 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.

### **How do I store and/or throw out this drug?**

- Store at room temperature in a dry place. Do not store in a bathroom.
- Keep all drugs in a safe place. Keep all drugs out of the reach of children and pets.
- Throw away unused or expired drugs. Do not flush down a toilet or pour down a drain unless you are told to do so. Check with your pharmacist if you have questions about the best way to throw out drugs. There may be drug take-back programs in your area.

## **General drug facts**

- If your symptoms or health problems do not get better or if they become worse, call your doctor.
- Do not share your drugs with others and do not take anyone else's drugs.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. Check with your pharmacist. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.
- If you think there has been an overdose, call your poison control center or get medical care right away. Be ready to tell or show what was taken, how much, and when it happened.

## **Consumer Information Use and Disclaimer**

This generalized information is a limited summary of diagnosis, treatment, and/or medication information. It is not meant to be comprehensive and should be used as a tool to help the user understand and/or assess potential diagnostic and treatment options. It does NOT



include all information about conditions, treatments, medications, side effects, or risks that may apply to a specific patient. It is not intended to be medical advice or a substitute for the medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment of a health care provider based on the health care provider's examination and assessment of a patient's specific and unique circumstances. Patients must speak with a health care provider for complete information about their health, medical questions, and treatment options, including any risks or benefits regarding use of medications. This information does not endorse any treatments or medications as safe, effective, or approved for treating a specific patient. UpToDate, Inc. and its affiliates disclaim any warranty or liability relating to this information or the use thereof. The use of this information is governed by the Terms of Use, available at

<https://www.wolterskluwer.com/en/know/clinical-effectiveness-terms>.

## **Last Reviewed Date**

2020-10-20

## **Copyright**

© 2024 UpToDate, Inc. and its affiliates and/or licensors. All rights reserved.

If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit [www.mskcc.org/pe](http://www.mskcc.org/pe) to search our virtual library.

---

Etidronate - Last updated on December 12, 2022

All rights owned and reserved by Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center