Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Alendronate

This information from UpToDate® Lexidrug™ 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: US

Binosto; Fosamax

Brand Names: Canada

ACH-Alendronate; AG-Alendronate; AG-Alendronate Sodium; Alendronate-70; APO-Alendronate; Auro-Alendronate; Fosamax; GEN-Alendronate; JAMP-Alendronate; JAMP-Alendronate Sodium; M-Alendronate; MINT-Alendronate; NRA-Alendronate; PMS-Alendronate-FC; RIVA-Alendronate; SANDOZ Alendronate [DSC]; TEVA-Alendronate

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to prevent or treat soft, brittle bones (osteoporosis).
- It is used to treat Paget's disease.
- 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: Esophagus problems, trouble swallowing, low calcium levels, or kidney disease.
- 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 patients taking this drug:

- Tell all of your health care providers that you take this drug. This includes your doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- Have your blood work and bone density checked as you have been told by your doctor.
- This drug works best when used with calcium/vitamin D and weight-bearing workouts like walking or PT (physical therapy).
- Follow the diet and exercise plan that your doctor told you about.
- 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.
- If you are on a low-sodium or sodium-free diet, talk with your doctor. Some of these products have sodium.
- Worsening of asthma has happened in people taking drugs like this one. Talk with the doctor.
- If you are pregnant or you get pregnant while taking this drug, call your doctor right away.
- Tell your doctor if you are breast-feeding. You will need to talk about any risks to your baby.

Children:

- This drug is not approved for use in children. However, the doctor may decide the benefits of taking this drug outweigh the risks. If your child has been given this drug, ask the doctor for information about the benefits and risks. Talk with the doctor if you have questions about giving this drug to your child.

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.
- Signs of esophagus problems like chest pain, trouble swallowing, pain when swallowing, or new or worse heartburn.
- Signs of low calcium levels like muscle cramps or spasms, numbness and tingling, or seizures.
- Black, tarry, or bloody stools.
- Coughing up blood.
- Sore throat.
- Throwing up blood or throw up that looks like coffee grounds.
- Very bad bone, joint, or muscle pain.
- Mouth sores.
- 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.

- Some people have had unusual bone breaks. This includes a broken thigh bone. Tell your doctor right away if you have any new or strange pain in the groin, hip, thigh, or other bone.

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:

- Constipation, diarrhea, stomach pain, or upset stomach.
- Muscle or joint pain.

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.

All products:

- Take on an empty stomach.
- Take at least 30 minutes before the first food, drink, or drugs of the day.
- Do not lie down for at least 30 minutes after taking this drug and until you eat your first food of the day.
- Keep taking this drug as you have been told by your doctor or other health

care provider, even if you feel well.

Tablets:

- Take with a full glass of water.
- Take with plain water only. Avoid taking with mineral water, milk, or other drinks.
- Swallow whole. Do not chew, break, or crush.
- Do not suck on this product.

Effervescent tablets:

- Dissolve the effervescent tablet in 1/2 glass (4 ounces/120 mL) of room temperature water only. Do not dissolve in cold or hot water. Do not swallow the tablet whole. Do not chew the tablet or let the tablet dissolve in your mouth.
- Do not suck on this product.
- When the water stops bubbling, wait at least 5 more minutes then stir for about 10 seconds and drink.
- Take with plain water only. Avoid taking with mineral water, milk, or other drinks.

Liquid (solution):

- Drink 1/4 cup of water after taking your full dose.
- Take with plain water only. Avoid taking with mineral water, milk, or other drinks.
- Measure liquid doses carefully. Use the measuring device that comes with this drug. If there is none, ask the pharmacist for a device to measure this drug.

What do I do if I miss a dose?

One time daily dosing:

- If you forget to take this drug in the morning, skip the missed dose and go back to your normal time the next morning.
- Do not take 2 doses on the same day.

One time weekly dosing:

- Take the missed dose on the next morning after you think about it and then go back to your normal time.
- Do not take 2 doses on the same day.

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

All products:

- 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.

Effervescent tablets:

- Store in original container.

Liquid (solution):

- Do not freeze.

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.
- This drug comes with an extra patient fact sheet called a Medication Guide. Read it with care. Read it again each time this drug is refilled. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with the doctor, 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.

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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 to search our virtual library.

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