Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Ibandronate

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.

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat or prevent soft, brittle bones (osteoporosis) in patients who have been through menopause (change of life).
- 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?

All products:

- 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 low calcium levels.
- If you have kidney problems.

Tablets:

- If you have an esophagus that is not normal.
- If you have trouble swallowing.
- If you are not able to stand or sit up for 1 hour.

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?

- 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 may affect certain lab tests. Tell all of your health care providers and lab workers that you take this drug.
- Follow the diet and exercise plan that your doctor told you about.
- This drug works best when used with calcium/vitamin D and weight-bearing workouts like walking or PT (physical therapy).
- 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.
- 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.

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:

All products:

- 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. Rarely, some allergic reactions have been deadly.
- Signs of low calcium levels like muscle cramps or spasms, numbness and tingling, or seizures.
- Signs of high blood pressure like very bad headache or dizziness, passing out, or change in eyesight.
- Pain when passing urine.
- Passing urine more often.
- Change in eyesight, eye pain, or severe eye irritation.
- 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.

Tablets:

- Signs of esophagus problems like chest pain, trouble swallowing, pain when swallowing, or new or worse heartburn.
- Black, tarry, or bloody stools.
- Coughing up blood.
- Throwing up blood or throw up that looks like coffee grounds.

Injection:

- Signs of kidney problems like unable to pass urine, change in how much urine is passed, blood in the urine, or a big weight gain.
- This drug may cause tissue damage if the drug leaks from the vein. Tell your nurse if you have any redness, burning, pain, swelling, blisters, skin sores, or leaking of fluid where the drug is going into your body.

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:

- Diarrhea, stomach pain, upset stomach, or throwing up.
- Flu-like signs.
- Signs of a common cold.
- Back, muscle, joint, arm, or leg pain.
- Headache.

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.

Tablets:

- Take 150 mg tablet on the same day each month.
- Take with a full glass of water at least 60 minutes before the first food, drink, or drugs of the day.
- Take with plain water only. Avoid taking with mineral water, milk, or other drinks.
- Swallow tablet whole. Do not chew, break, or crush.
- Do not suck on this product.
- Do not lie down for at least 60 minutes after taking this drug.
- Do not take calcium, iron, vitamins with minerals, or antacids within 1 hour of this drug.
- Keep taking this drug as you have been told by your doctor or other health care provider, even if you feel well.

Injection:

- It is given as a shot into a vein.

What do I do if I miss a dose?

Tablets:

- Do not take it later in the day.
- Take the missed dose on the next morning after you think about it and then go back to your normal time.
- If it is less than 7 days until your next dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your regular schedule.

- Do not take two 150 mg tablets within the same week.

Injection:

- Call the doctor for an office visit.

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

Tablets:

- Store at room temperature in a dry place. Do not store in a bathroom.

Injection:

- If you need to store this drug at home, talk with your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist about how to store it.

All products:

- 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

2026-02-26

Copyright

© 2026 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 to search our virtual library.

Ibandronate - Last updated on December 12, 2022

All rights owned and reserved by Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center