Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# Zoledronic Acid

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

Reclast

## Brand Names: Canada

Aclasta; JAMP-Zoledronic Acid; TARO-Zoledronic Acid; Zoledronic Acid - Z; Zometa

## What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat high calcium levels in patients with cancer.
- It is used when treating some cancers.
- It is used to treat Paget's disease.
- It is used to prevent or treat soft, brittle bones (osteoporosis).
- 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: Kidney disease, low calcium levels, malabsorption syndrome, or underactive parathyroid gland.
- If you have had thyroid surgery, parathyroid surgery, or your small bowel

removed.

- If you are taking another drug that has the same drug in it.
- If you are using another drug like this one. If you are not sure, ask your doctor or pharmacist.
- If you are pregnant or may be pregnant. Do not take this drug if you are pregnant.
- If you are breast-feeding. Do not breast-feed while you take this drug. You may also need to avoid breast-feeding for some time after your last dose. Talk with your doctor to see if you need to avoid breast-feeding after your last dose.

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.
- Have your blood work and bone density checked as you have been told by your doctor.
- Take calcium and vitamin D as you were told by your doctor.
- Have a dental exam before starting this drug.
- Take good care of your teeth. See a dentist often.
- You will need to be sure that you are not dehydrated before getting this drug. Check with your doctor to see if you need to drink extra fluids before getting this drug.

- Worsening of asthma has happened in people taking drugs like this one. Talk with the doctor.
- If you are 65 or older, use this drug with care. You could have more side effects.
- This drug may cause fertility problems. This may affect being able to have children. Talk with the doctor.
- A pregnancy test may need to be done before you start this drug to show that you are NOT pregnant. You may need to use birth control while taking this drug and for some time after the last dose. Talk with your doctor about using birth control. If you get pregnant, call your doctor right away.

### Using this drug for bone health:

- 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.

## 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:

### For all uses of this drug:

- 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 fluid and electrolyte problems like mood changes, confusion, muscle pain or weakness, fast or abnormal heartbeat, severe dizziness or passing out, increased thirst, seizures, feeling very tired or weak, decreased appetite, unable to pass urine or change in the amount of urine produced,

dry mouth, dry eyes, or severe upset stomach or throwing up.

- 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.
- Signs of high blood pressure like very bad headache or dizziness, passing out, or change in eyesight.
- Shortness of breath.
- A burning, numbness, or tingling feeling that is not normal.
- Chest pain.
- Change in eyesight, eye pain, or severe eye irritation.
- Trouble swallowing.
- Very bad pain when swallowing.
- Swelling in the arms or legs.
- 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.

## Using this drug during cancer treatment:

- Signs of a urinary tract infection (UTI) like blood in the urine, burning or pain when passing urine, feeling the need to pass urine often or right away, fever, lower stomach pain, or pelvic pain.
- Fever, chills, or sore throat; any unexplained bruising or bleeding; or feeling very tired or weak.
- Vaginal itching or discharge.
- Feeling agitated.

- Depression.
- Mouth sores.

## 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:

### For all uses of this drug:

- Feeling dizzy, tired, or weak.
- Constipation, diarrhea, stomach pain, upset stomach, or throwing up.
- Heartburn.
- Headache.
- Flu-like signs.
- Back, joint, muscle, neck, arm, or leg pain.

### Using this drug during cancer treatment:

- Trouble sleeping.
- Decreased appetite.
- Weight loss.
- Cough.
- Anxiety.
- Hair loss.

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.

### For all uses of this drug:

- It is given as an infusion into a vein over a period of time.
- Drink lots of noncaffeine liquids unless told to drink less liquid by your doctor.

### Using this drug for bone health:

- Acetaminophen may be given to lower fever and chills.
- Drink at least 2 glasses of liquids a few hours before you get this drug.

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

- Call your doctor to find out what to do.

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

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

## 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.
- 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.

- 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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