

ZOLEDRONIC ACID

Aclasta



Important note: The following information is intended to add to, not replace, the knowledge and judgment of your doctor, pharmacist or other health care professional.

Why you are taking this medicine

Zoledronic acid belongs to a group of medicines known as bisphosphonates. They work by preventing bone breakdown and increasing bone density (thickness) to make bones stronger and less likely to break.

Zoledronic acid infusion is used to treat or prevent:

- Osteoporosis (where you have weak or brittle bones)
- Paget's disease of the bones (a condition in which the body replaces healthy bones with weak bones)

How is this medicine given?

- Zoledronic acid is given by infusion through a needle into a vein (known as intravenous or IV administration).
- Infusions usually take 15 to 30 minutes.
- Infusions are usually given once a year. In some patients infusions may be once every 18 months to 2 years.

Before having your infusion, make sure your doctor or pharmacist knows:

- If you suffer from kidney problems.
- If you are taking a bisphosphonate tablet e.g. risedronate or alendronate.
- If you are taking diuretic therapy (commonly called water or fluid tablets).
- If you are taking a pain killer called an anti-inflammatory (NSAID) such as ibuprofen (Nurofen), diclofenac (Voltaren, Cataflam), naproxen (Naprogenic, Naprosyn).
- If you are pregnant (or thinking of becoming pregnant).
- If you are breast feeding.
- If you have any problems with your mouth or teeth.

On the day of your infusion

- If taking diuretic tablets (water or fluid tablets) do not take these on the morning of your infusion.
- Make sure that drink enough fluids. Two full glasses of water (250mL each) before your infusion to prevent kidney problems.

Side Effects

Unfortunately as well as having good effects, most medicines have some effects on your body that are unwanted. These are called *side effects*.

- About 30% of patients experience flu-like feelings after their first infusion – fever, chills, muscle, bone and joint pain, nausea, fatigue, headache.
- This can last for 2-3 days.
- Paracetamol can provide some relief – take paracetamol or ibuprofen: e.g. paracetamol 500mg 2 tablets every 6 hours for 3 three days.
- The chance of this side effect occurring after the second or third infusion is much lower (about 3-4%).

Call your doctor or nurse **immediately** if you have any of these side effects:

- Feel unwell when having the zoledronic acid infusion.
- Signs of allergy such as rash, itching or hives on the skin; swelling of the face or hands, throat, lips, trouble breathing, tightness of the chest.
- Signs that the level of calcium in your blood may have fallen too far, such as muscle spasms, numbness or tingling sensation, especially around the mouth; shortness of breath.
- Signs that your kidneys may not be working properly, such as decreased urine output (not peeing much).

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if any of these side effects are of concern to you:

- bone, muscle or joint pain or stiffness
- fatigue or tiredness
- excessive sweating
- heart burn or indigestion or stomach (abdominal) pain
- feeling thirsty
- shortness of breath
- pink eye (conjunctivitis)
- swollen, red, painful or itchy eyes or sensitivity of the eyes to light
- redness, swelling or pain where the needle for the infusion was inserted

Very rarely zoledronic acid can cause problems with your jaw (osteonecrosis of the jaw; ulceration in tooth sockets or the gums). This is mainly in cancer patients receiving much higher doses of zoledronic acid than those used for osteoporosis. Make sure that your dentist knows you have had a zoledronic acid infusion.

- Let your doctor know if you have any problems with your mouth or teeth.
- You should look after your teeth - brush your teeth regularly and have regular dental check-ups. If you wear dentures you should make sure these fit properly.
- If you are under dental treatment or will undergo dental surgery (e.g. tooth extractions), inform your doctor and tell your dentist that you are being treated with zoledronic acid.
- Contact your doctor and dentist immediately if you experience any problems with your mouth or teeth such as loose teeth, pain or swelling, or non-healing of sores or discharge, as these could be signs of bone damage to the jaw.

Very rarely upper leg fractures have been reported, but zoledronic acid prevents far more fractures than it causes.

The list of side effects is **not** complete. Tell your doctor or pharmacist if these side effects are of a concern to you.

After your infusion

- Make sure that you drink enough fluids - two full glasses of water (250mL each) after your infusion.
- Take your calcium and vitamin D supplements if advised to.
- Take paracetamol or ibuprofen if advised to, to reduce side effects.

Other Medication

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking any other medicine including herbal or complementary products and medicines you can buy without a prescription.

Read this leaflet and discuss any questions you have about your medicines with your doctor or pharmacist.