Intravenous Zoledronate

Information for patients

Secondary Care

Your doctor or specialist nurse has recommended that you can have treatment with intravenous zoledronate for your osteoporosis. This leaflet gives you further information about this treatment.

What is zoledronate?

- Zoledronate is a medicine that is used in the treatment of osteoporosis to reduce the risk of broken bones
- Zoledronate belongs to a group of medicines which are called bisphosphonates
- Zoledronate is also known as zoledronic acid and Aclasta.

How does zoledronate work?
Zoledronate works by attaching to the bone and slowing down the bone loss seen in osteoporosis. New bone formation continues so that overall there will be some improvement in bone density. Zoledronate also has other effects upon the bone structure which will result in improved bone strength. All of this will lead to a reduced risk of broken bones.

How will zoledronate be given?
Zoledronate will be given in a hospital setting. The usual dose is 5mgs and it is given directly into a vein by an intravenous infusion or “drip”. This will take approximately 15 minutes.

You will be asked to stay in hospital for a short time after your treatment for general observation.

Zoledronate is usually required once a year for three years.

What should I do before my zoledronate treatment?
It is important that you have adequate calcium and Vitamin D whilst receiving a course of zoledronate. Your doctor or nurse will have recommended and prescribed these nutrients in supplement form.
A few weeks prior to receiving zoledronate we recommend that you have a blood sample checked to ensure your kidneys are functioning correctly and that your calcium levels are adequate.

On the day of the treatment you do not need to fast and it is best if you are well hydrated so you should drink plenty of fluid before this treatment is given.
What are the most common side effects of zoledronate?
As with all medicines, some people may have side effects when they receive this treatment. Some of the side effects are flu-like symptoms including a temperature, headache and general aches and pains. These symptoms are usually mild and occur within the first three days following zoledronate treatment.

These symptoms usually settle quickly. Taking paracetamol before your treatment and for 2 – 3 days afterwards can help. These symptoms tend to occur after the first treatment and are much less likely after further treatments. If these symptoms do not settle quickly you should contact your GP. Your GP may then wish to consult with the team who organised your zoledronate treatment.

Are there any other side effects that I should be aware of?
A very rare side effect, occurring perhaps in 1 in 20,000 patients taking any of the bisphosphonate drugs is a condition called osteonecrosis of the jaw. This could mean delayed healing in the tooth socket or jaw area if major dental work is required. Having simple fillings or dental hygiene will not increase your risk.

If your teeth are in poor condition you should have a dental check up before starting treatment with zoledronate. If you are about to have a tooth removed or root canal treatment you should wait six weeks before having your zoledronate infusion or until your gum has healed.

After receiving zoledronate you should maintain good dental hygiene and go for routine dental check-ups.

Tell your dentist you are receiving zoledronate infusions.

Another very rare side effect is a slightly higher risk of atrial fibrillation which is an irregularity of the heartbeat. This was only shown in one study and a further study did not show this. This may just be a chance finding.

Stress fractures of the middle or top of the thigh bone have been reported in a small number of patients taking bisphosphonate treatments. You should let your doctor know if you develop any pain in your thigh area.

Do I require any other treatment for Osteoporosis?
Most patients who are treated with zoledronate also require to continue to take Calcium and Vitamin D supplements. Calcium and Vitamin D are usually taken once or twice daily in tablet form. It is very important to take these if they have been prescribed for you.

Will zoledronate affect my ability to drive or return to work?
Zoledronate has no known effects on the ability to drive or use machines and there should be no problem about returning to work after this treatment.
More information about osteoporosis and zoledronate is available from:

The Royal Osteoporosis Society
Camberton
Bath
BA2 0PJ

Website:  [www.theros.org.uk](http://www.theros.org.uk)

Helpline:  0808 800 0035

If you have any further questions about zoledronate or osteoporosis then please speak to the doctor or nurse recommending this treatment.