Oxford University Hospitals

NHS

NHS Trust

How to take Alendronic Acid and Calcium and Vitamin D

Information for patients

As you have recently fractured (broken) a bone you have been seen by the Oxfordshire Fracture Prevention Service. They have recommended that you start treatment to reduce the risk of another broken bone. This treatment involves taking alendronic acid. You may also need to take calcium and vitamin D.

How to take alendronic acid

Alendronic acid is a drug used for the treatment of osteoporosis. It works by slowing down the production of the cells that wear down bone (osteoclasts). This helps to improve bone strength and makes the bone less fragile.

When and how you take alendronic acid can affect whether it will work or not. It is very important that you follow these instructions <u>exactly</u> when taking your alendronic acid.

Take your alendronic acid tablet <u>once a week</u> (on the same day every week), first thing in the morning on an empty stomach with a large glass of tap water.

- **Swallow the tablet whole.**

- Never chew, crush or suck the tablet as this can cause side effects such as mouth ulcers and heartburn.

- Stay upright for the next 30 minutes. This is so the tablet stays in your stomach and it also reduces the risk of indigestion.
  You could choose an upright activity such as taking a shower (but try not to bend down to pick anything up), or sitting in a chair and reading or watching television.

- Do not eat anything for at least 30 minutes, including taking any other medication. This will stop the treatment working and your bones will not be protected.

Do not take alendronic acid with:
- tea, coffee, juice, squash or even bottled water; it will not be absorbed properly and won't be effective in protecting your bones.

How to take calcium and vitamin D

You have also been advised to take calcium and vitamin D, as you do not have enough calcium in your diet. Calcium and vitamin D are very important as they are the nutrients your bone needs to make sure the alendronate will work effectively. Calcium gives your bones strength and rigidity. Vitamin D is needed to help your body absorb calcium.

Take the calcium and vitamin D at the **same time <u>every day</u>, but not within 4 hours of taking the alendronic acid.** If you have been advised to take it twice a day then this should be at lunchtime and dinnertime. If you are just taking it once a day, then choose one of these mealtimes. You can take the calcium and vitamin D either before you start eating or after you have finished.

Getting your prescription

It is important you continue with this medication for at least the next five years. You will need to make sure that you get the alendronic acid, calcium and vitamin D put on your repeat prescription and order it well in advance every month.

When you have received the letter from the Fracture Prevention Service detailing the outcome of your consultation, please contact your GP to arrange for them to prescribe you the medication.

Oxfordshire Fracture Prevention Service

We will contact you four months after you broke your bone, with a questionnaire about your medication. Please complete all sides of the questionnaire and return it to us in the prepaid envelope. This helps us to check on how well you are managing the treatment and to make sure it is the best option for you.

If you have any questions at any time or are having problems with the medication, please contact us:

Tel: 01865 227 647
(Monday to Friday, 7.30am to 4.30pm)

Email: ox.osteo@nhs.net

Please have your NHS number or MRN (hospital number) available. You can find this on any letter you have been sent from either us, the hospital or your GP. This will help us answer your query more quickly and efficiently.

If you have a specific requirement, need an interpreter, a document in Easy Read, another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01865 221 473** or email **PALSJR@ouh.nhs.uk**