

- Tell your doctor of all the medical problems you have or have had in the past.
- Tell your doctor if you are pregnant, planning to become pregnant, or are breast-feeding.

What happens if I miss a dose or take more than the prescribed dose of alendronate?

If you miss a dose, don't take the dose later in the day. Take your 1 tablet of alendronate once a day the next morning. If you are on a weekly schedule and forget to take your dose, take one dose on the morning after you remember. Never take two doses on the same day and return to taking one dose once a week as originally scheduled on your chosen day.

If you think you took more than the prescribed dose, drink a full glass of milk and contact your local poison control center or emergency room right away. Do not try to vomit. Do not lie down.

What are the side effects of this drug?

Severe digestive reactions - including irritation, inflammation, and ulcers of the esophagus - have been reported in some patients, especially those who did not follow the "How do I take the medication"

instructions above. Generally, side effects reported in patients taking alendronate have been mild and have not caused patients to stop taking the drug.

The most common side effect reported is abdominal pain. Less common side effects are nausea/vomiting, full feeling in stomach, constipation, diarrhea, black or bloody bowel movements, gas, headache, change in sense of taste, and bone/muscle and/or joint pain.

What storage conditions are necessary for this drug?

Remember:

- Keep alendronate in the container it came in, tightly sealed.
- Store it away from moisture, heat and direct sunlight. Do not store this medication in the bathroom, near the kitchen sink or in damp places. Store alendronate at room temperature.
- Keep alendronate out of the reach of children.
- Never share your medication with anyone.
- Never take outdated medications. Some medication prescription labels list an expiration date. If such a date is not on your medication label or if you are unsure how old a medication is, call your pharmacy.

When should I call my health care provider?

Stop taking alendronate and call your doctor if you have chest pain, new or worsening heartburn, or have trouble or pain when you swallow.

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This handout summarizes information to help you understand and safely take your medicine. Other information - not included in this handout - might be important for you to know because of your unique health status. Ask your doctor and/or pharmacist for more information on the medicines prescribed for you and your unique health care needs.



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SECTION OF NASAL & SINUS DISORDERS
216.444.6691 or 1.800.223.2273 ext. 46691

Hearing Impaired (TTY) Assistance
216.444.0261

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Health Information

Why is my sinus doctor prescribing Fosamax®?

**Head & Neck Institute
Nasal & Sinus Disorders
216.444.6691**

What is alendronate?

Why is this drug prescribed?

Alendronate is indicated for the treatment and prevention of osteoporosis in women after menopause; for the treatment of men with osteoporosis; for the treatment of osteoporosis in men or women receiving corticosteroid medications; and for the treatment of Paget's disease of bone in men and women.

Why is my sinus doctor prescribing alendronate?

Many patients with chronic rhinosinusitis (sinusitis) with or without polyps will receive oral steroids (prednisone, methylprednisolone) as part of their treatment, especially if they have asthma, too. These steroids are important for their treatment, but the steroids often have side effects, including loss of bone density. As people get older, there is a gradual reduction of bone density, especially in women, and oral steroids can accelerate this process. Thus, alendronate is prescribed to reduce and even reverse the loss of bone density associated with oral steroid treatments.

What type of evaluation of bone density will I need?

Your sinus doctor may recommend a bone density test, and he will suggest further evaluation by other physicians, including rheumatologists in the Cleveland Clinic Bone Center. Alternatively, you may choose to work through your local physician for this part of your care.

How does alendronate work?

Alendronate is a member of a class of drugs known as bisphosphonates. Bisphosphonates prevent certain types of cells (called osteoclasts) from breaking down bone.

As you age, the osteoclasts remove more bone than is being made -- leading to a "thinning" of bone that can result in bone fractures. Osteopenia refers to a mild thinning of bone mass. Osteoporosis literally means "porous bone" and results in an increased loss of bone mass and strength, making bones more susceptible to sudden and unexpected fractures.

How do I take the medication?

Alendronate is available in tablets (5-, 10-, 35-, 40-, 70-mg tablets) and oral solution (70 mg). Alendronate is most commonly taken once each week. It may

also be taken once a day, in the morning, every day. Your doctor will decide what dosage and dosing schedule is best for you. Carefully read and follow the instructions listed below:

- Swallow your alendronate tablet (1 tablet) after getting up for the day but before eating, drinking, or taking any other medication. Take alendronate with a full glass (6 to 8 ounces) of plain water; do not take with juice, coffee, tea, or mineral water. Do not chew on or suck the alendronate tablet.
- After taking the alendronate tablet, do not lie down. Remain fully upright (standing, sitting, or walking) for at least 30 minutes. This helps reduce any possible drug irritation to your esophagus (the tube leading from your mouth to your stomach).
- After waiting at least 30 minutes after taking alendronate, you may eat your first food, drink, or take your other medications of the day. (Alendronate is effective only if taken on an empty stomach).
- Do not take alendronate at bedtime or before getting up for the day.

What special instructions should I follow while using this drug?

Do not take alendronate if you:

- Have problems with your esophagus.
- Cannot sit or stand for at least 30 minutes.
- Have low levels of calcium in your blood.
- Do not start taking any new medicine (including birth control pills) without first telling your healthcare provider or pharmacist.
- Have severe kidney disease.
- Are allergic to alendronate or any of its ingredients.

Never take a larger dose of alendronate or take it more often than prescribed by your doctor.

What special precautions should I follow before using this drug?

Please:

- Tell your doctor of all other medications you are taking, including vitamins, herbals, dietary supplements, and other prescription and nonprescription (over-the-counter) medications.
- Tell your doctor if you have swallowing problems.
- Tell your doctor if you have stomach or digestive problems.