

GENERIC NAME: **Etidronate Disodium
Calcium Carbonate**

BRAND NAME: **Didrocal/Didronel**



How it works:

Osteoporosis is a condition that causes a reduction in a person's bone density (amount of bone tissue). As such, the bones become thinner, more porous & fragile. This condition leads to an increased risk of broken bone or fracture.



Normal bone



Osteoporosis

Etidronate in combination with calcium is taken to help prevent osteoporosis & to also treat osteoporosis in

- people on cortisone therapy for 3 months or longer
- post menopausal women with low bone mineral density
- men with low bone mineral density

Etidronate is taken for 14 days every 3 months to help stop the destructive process that weakens your bones.

Calcium is taken daily to help harden new bone.

How quickly it works:

You will not feel any effects in your bones from taking etidronate. Your doctor will monitor your response to treatment with a bone mineral density test 1 – 2 years after starting therapy.

How to take:

Didrocal is a tablet taken in a 90 day cycle:

- etidronate 400 mg taken daily for 14 days every 3 months followed by
- elemental calcium carbonate 500 mg daily for 76 days

Didronel

- etidronate 400 mg tablet is taken for 14 days every 3 months
- no calcium is supplied with this medication

Etidronate:

- is taken on an empty stomach at bedtime at least 2 hours before or after eating or drinking
- Take with a full glass of water.
- Do not take within 2 hours of taking food high in calcium (milk products), medications such as antacids, laxatives or vitamins & mineral supplements that contain calcium, magnesium, iron or aluminum.



If you forget to take etidronate at your usual time of the day, skip the dose & take your usual dose the next day.

How much calcium & vitamin D should I take?

Calcium & Vitamin D requirements:

- It is extremely important that an adequate amount of calcium & vitamin D is taken daily to enhance the full benefit of the etidronate that you are taking & prevent any side effects of the medication.
- Recommended total daily requirements:
 - elemental calcium 1500 mg and vitamin D 800 IU if you are - over 50 years of age or
 - postmenopausal or
 - on cortisone therapy



- The total daily dose of elemental calcium & vitamin D should be obtained from both food sources and dietary supplements as needed
- It is recommended that in addition to your diet you take the following supplements:
 Calcium (carbonate/citrate) _____ mg
 Vitamin D _____ IU
- Calcium carbonate supplied with your Didrocal prescription should be taken with food to enhance absorption.

should be taken with food or drink to enhance absorption.

Tests:

A bone mineral test is generally done initially to establish the state of your bones & is repeated every 1 - 2 years to monitor effectiveness of the therapy.



Side Effects:

Possible side effects:

- Etidronate may cause stomach problems such as nausea & diarrhea
- Calcium carbonate may cause constipation

Rare side effects:

- etidronate may cause
 - stomach pain, bloating, flatulence, constipation & vomiting
 - joint pain
 - burning in throat
 - hives, skin rash, itching, swelling,
 - hair loss
 - headache
 - confusion or depression

Managing Side Effects:

Contact your doctor:

- if you develop any of the above symptoms.
- Side effects can occur anytime during treatment and are usually temporary.



Precautions:



Etidronate should not be taken if

- planning pregnancy, pregnant or breast feeding
- have advanced kidney disease
- have low blood levels of calcium
- If taking warfarin (an anticoagulant), your prothrombin time should be monitored more closely when starting etidronate.

Illness:



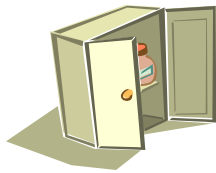
- If illness occurs while taking your course of etidronate, stop the medication if unable to tolerate, and continue taking when you feel better.

Surgery:

- Since etidronate is only taken for 2 weeks every 3 months the medication can be arranged to taken either before or after the surgery.



Storage:



- Keep medication in the original container and tightly closed.
- Keep in a cool cupboard, & not in your bathroom as it is a warm, moist environment.

General medication considerations:

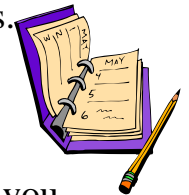


1. **Take your medication as instructed by your physician.** Work with your physician in determining how much medication you need to take. Taking more medication than is recommended increases your risk of side effects.

Skipping doses of medication will decrease the desired effect of the medication.

2. **Keep a diary.** As a reminder, record when you take your medications & any reasons for changes or withdrawal of medications.

3. **Keep a medication list in your wallet.** Record all medications, vitamin/mineral & herbal supplements you are presently taking & any allergies you may have.



Disclaimer:

This information does not replace medical advice. Specific questions about medications should be discussed with your doctor or pharmacist.