

GENERIC NAME:

Alendronate Sodium



BRAND NAME:

Fosamax

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

Fosamax in combination with calcium & vitamin D 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

Fosamax is taken to help stop the destructive process that weakens your bones.

Calcium & vitamin D3 is also taken daily to help harden new bone.

How quickly it works:

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

How to take:

Fosamax is supplied in 5, 10, 40 or 70 mg tablets.

To treat osteoporosis it is taken as:

- 70 mg tablet one day per week or
- 10 mg tablet every day

To prevent osteoporosis it is taken as:

- 40 mg tablet one day per week or
- 5 mg tablet every day



Fosamax:

- is taken on an empty stomach at least ½ hour before breakfast.
- Take with a full glass of plain water.
- Do not chew or suck the tablet.
- Do not lie down – stay fully upright (sitting, standing, or walking) for at least 30 minutes **and** until after the first food of the day.
- Do not take food high in calcium (milk products), medications such as antacids, laxatives or vitamins & mineral supplements that contain calcium, magnesium, iron or aluminum for at least 2 hours after taking Fosamax.



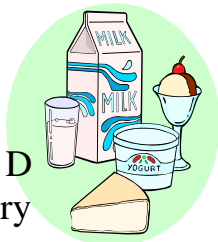
If you forget to take Fosamax on your usual day, skip the dose & take your usual dose the next day.

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 Fosamax that you are taking & prevent any side effects of the medication.
- Recommended total daily requirements:
 - elemental calcium 1500 mg and vitamin D3 800 IU if you are one of the following
 - over 50 years of age
 - postmenopausal
 - on cortisone therapy
 - have osteoporosis

- 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 D3 _____ IU

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:

- Side effects while on Fosamax are usually mild & rare.
- Fosamax may cause
 - stomach upset such as nausea, stomach pain or bloating
 - diarrhea or constipation
 - heartburn or burning in the throat
 - joint pain
 - headache

Managing Side Effects:

Contact your doctor:

- if you develop any of the above symptoms.
- If you develop any difficulty or pain upon swallowing, chest pain or new/worsening of heartburn, stop taking Fosamax & contact your doctor.
- Side effects can occur any time during treatment.



Precautions:



Fosamax should not be taken if you

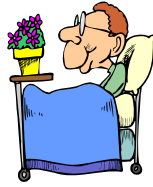
- are planning pregnancy, pregnant or breast feeding
- have advanced kidney disease
- have low blood levels of calcium
- are less than 18 years of age

Illness:



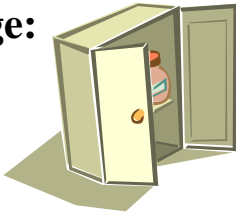
If illness occurs while taking Fosamax, stop the medication if unable to tolerate, and continue taking when you feel better.

Surgery:



- Fosamax may be discontinued during the week of your surgery.
- Develop a plan with your doctor about medications & vitamin/mineral or herbal supplements when having upcoming surgery, dental work or other procedures.

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:



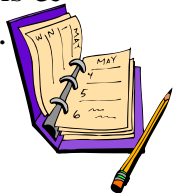
- 1. Take your medication as instructed by your physician.**
Work with your physician to determine how much medication you need.

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.