

Zoledronic Acid (Reclast/Zometa) Infusion Instructions

What is zoledronic acid?

This is a medication used for men and women who have osteoporosis and/or are at high risk for fracture. The drug is similar to other medications for osteoporosis such as alendronate (Fosamax), risedronate (Actonel) and ibandronate (Boniva). These medications are all different types of *bisphosphonates*.

How do I take zoledronic acid?

Unlike other bisphosphonates that are taken by mouth, this medication is given intravenously (through the vein) one time per year to help strengthen the bones. Zoledronic acid is administered in the hospital infusion center.

Who is a good candidate for the zoledronic acid infusion?

Unfortunately, only a small percentage of oral medications for osteoporosis are absorbed in the stomach. For some people, so little of the medication gets into the bone that the medication does not effectively treat the bone disease. Because zoledronic acid bypasses the gut (and goes through the vein instead), it can better prevent bone loss in some people. Zoledronic acid is also a good choice of bisphosphonates for people who have troubles with their esophagus or stomach. These conditions include, but are not limited to, reflux disease, difficulty swallowing, esophageal spasm, and peptic ulcer disease.

What are the risks associated with the zoledronic acid infusion?

In people who have vitamin D deficiency, the medication can cause low blood calcium levels. Your doctor should check your vitamin D level before the infusion and give you replacement vitamin D, if needed, to prevent low blood calcium. In approximately 5-10% of men and women who get zoledronic acid for the first time, a flu-like illness (muscle aches, low-grade fever, etc.) after the infusion may occur. Following the preparation instructions below can help to prevent this complication. Finally, there is a rare side effect called osteonecrosis of the jaw. Bone in the jaw can become inflamed and exposed. This condition is typically associated with high dose, frequent bisphosphonate infusions but has been reported in men and women receiving zoledronic acid for osteoporosis. To prevent this rare complication, the infusion should not be given within 2 months of an invasive dental procedure (root canal, dental implant, tooth extraction, etc.). Please notify your doctor if you have an upcoming dental procedure planned so that she can schedule your infusion accordingly.

How do I prepare for my zoledronic acid infusion?

1. Stay hydrated the day before, day of, and day after your infusion.
2. Unless you have been told by another medical professional not to take acetaminophen or similar drugs, take extra-strength acetaminophen (Tylenol) 650mg three times daily the day before, day of, and day after your infusion.

What if I have questions before my infusion?

Feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns that you might have.