



A guide to...

Denosumab (Prolia®) Treatment of Osteoporosis

Patient Information

How to contact us

Pharmacy

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If you need this leaflet in another language, large print, Braille or audio version,
please call **01923 217 198** or email westherts.pals@nhs.net



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What is osteoporosis?

Osteoporosis means 'porous bones'. It is a condition where the bones become thin and break more easily. Broken bones (fractures) in osteoporosis often occur in the wrist, hip or spinal bones (vertebrae) but osteoporosis affects all the bones in the body. Fractures in osteoporosis can occur very easily, for example in a simple fall or through lifting awkwardly. About one-in-three women and one-in-five men over 50 will fracture a bone because of osteoporosis, therefore, it is important to keep your bones healthy.

What is denosumab?

Denosumab is a human monoclonal antibody used to treat osteoporosis. It makes the bones stronger by stopping the cells that break down bone. By taking denosumab, the risk of your next fracture is reduced by over 50%.

How is it administered?

Denosumab (Prolia[®]) 60mg injection is given subcutaneously (under the skin) every six months. The first injection is administered in hospital under specialist supervision. The second injection is administered at your GP practice and the nurse can explain how to self-administer future injections at home.

What will happen before starting treatment?

A blood test to review calcium levels, vitamin D levels and kidney function is necessary before the first injection is prescribed.

How long will I stay on Denosumab?

After a total course of ten injections (five years of treatment) a review with your specialist should be organised with a repeat DXA scan organised by your GP.

What if I miss a dose?

Each denosumab injection lasts for six months. To get the most benefit from your treatment, it is important to have regular injections, ideally within two weeks, either side, of the due date. If a dose is missed, an appointment should be organised with your GP to ensure the next injection is given as soon as possible. This is because there have been reports of increased risk of multiple fractures in the spine after stopping or delaying ongoing treatment. Please discuss with your doctor before you consider stopping treatment.

Who cannot have denosumab?

You cannot have denosumab if:

- You have a low blood calcium level
- You are intolerant to fructose or the active substance
- You are allergic to latex
- You are pregnant or breast feeding

Are there any side effects?

Patients are unlikely to develop side effects. However, the most common side effects include: limb pain, urinary tract infections, chest infections, sciatica, constipation, abdominal discomfort, rashes, cataract reported in men using denosumab for prostate cancer, skin infections, low blood calcium levels causing: numbness or tingling in your fingers, toes or around your mouth, muscle spasms, twitches or cramps.

A very rare side effect is osteonecrosis of the jaw. In this condition, some of the cells in the affected jawbone die. It can lead to delayed healing and problems usually following major dental work. There have been only a very small number of cases identified worldwide in patients treated with denosumab for osteoporosis, so the risk associated is extremely low. Any ear pain, discharge from the ear, or an ear infection during denosumab treatment also needs to be promptly reported.

Please discuss with your doctor or pharmacist if you are experiencing any side effects.

What else do I need to do?

- It is important to have regular dental care to maintain good oral hygiene and let your dentist know you are receiving treatment with denosumab.
- Continue taking calcium and vitamin D supplements as it is important to have adequate calcium and vitamin D levels for denosumab to be most effective.
- Inform your doctor of any new thigh or groin pain.
- Ensure you have a blood test within four weeks of every injection to review calcium levels and kidney function.
- Maintain healthy bones with a well-balanced diet including calcium rich foods, safe exposure to sunlight to obtain vitamin D, regular weight bearing exercise, avoid smoking and keep alcohol consumption within the recommended limits of 14 units per week for both men and women.

Additional support available

National Osteoporosis Society

<http://www.theros.org.uk>

Osteoporosis helpline:

0808 800 0035

Age Concern

www.ageuk.org.uk