

# Alendronate

[Al-en-DROW-nate]  
Fosamax®, Fosavance®

<http://Rheuminfo.com>  
your rheumatology resource

## How to use this medication

### What is it



Alendronate is a medication used to treat and prevent thinning of the bones (called osteoporosis).

### Take it once a day or once a week



Alendronate can be taken once a day as a 5 or 10 mg tablet. Alendronate can also be taken **once a week** as a 35 mg or 70 mg tablet.

### Take it sitting up in the morning



Alendronate should be taken **first thing in the morning. Do not lie down** after taking the medicine.

### No eating or drinking



Alendronate should be taken on an **empty stomach. Wait at least 1 hour** before taking any other medication or eating or drinking anything.

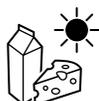
### Take it with water only



Take alendronate with a **full glass of water**. Do not take it with coffee, juice or tea.

## What you need to do

### Take calcium & vitamin D



To help build your bones you should take calcium & vitamin D while taking alendronate. Your doctor will tell you the right amount of calcium and vitamin D for you.

### Don't get pregnant or breastfeed



Alendronate should not be taken during pregnancy or breastfeeding. Stop the medicine and let your doctor know if you become pregnant while taking alendronate.

### Pain in the jaw



Medicines like alendronate have been associated with a very rare problem with the jaw (osteonecrosis). This problem has been seen after dental work. Let your doctor know if you develop sudden pain in the jaw.

### Bone mineral density (BMD) testing



Your doctor will monitor your response to alendronate by testing your BMD. This is usually done every 1 to 3 years. Talk to your doctor.

## Side effects & important facts

### Nausea & diarrhea



The most common side effect of alendronate is stomach upset, pain, bloating, and nausea. Alendronate can irritate the lining of the stomach, esophagus, or intestine. This is rare. It can result in stomach pain or trouble swallowing.

### Headache



Alendronate can rarely cause a headache.

### Muscle & bone pain



Alendronate can cause bone, muscle, or joint pain. This is rare.

## When should I call my doctor

### Please call if you need to stop



- If you feel sick and want to stop
- If you are concerned about any side effects
- If you want to or have already stopped the medicine

### Other reasons to call your doctor:



Stomach pain or trouble swallowing



Pregnant or Planning Pregnancy



New severe pain in the jaw



If you are having surgery

## Other important information

### Stopping alendronate



You can simply stop taking alendronate. You do not need to wean off it. Please call your doctor if you stop the medication.