

# Etidronate

[Ee-tid-ROW-nate]  
Didronel®, Didrocal®

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

## How to use this medication

### What is it



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

### Take it every day for 14 days



Etidronate is taken in 90-day cycles. For the first 14 days 400 mg of etidronate is taken each day. For the remaining 76 days a 500 mg calcium tablet is taken.

### Take it sitting up in the morning



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

### No eating or drinking



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

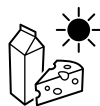
### Take it with water only



Take etidronate 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 etidronate. Your doctor will tell you the right amount of calcium and vitamin D for you.

### Don't get pregnant or breastfeed



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

### Pain in the jaw



Medicines like etidronate 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 etidronate by testing your BMD. This is usually done every 1 to 3 years. Talk to your doctor.

## Side effects & important facts

### Nausea & diarrhea



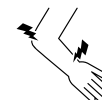
The most common side effect of etidronate is stomach upset, pain, bloating, and nausea. Etidronate can irritate the lining of the stomach, esophagus, or intestine. This is rare. It can result in stomach pain or trouble swallowing.

### Headache



Etidronate can rarely cause a headache.

### Muscle & bone pain



Etidronate 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 etidronate



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