

# Zoledronic Acid

**Care Team Contact Information:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Pharmacy Contact Information:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Diagnosis:** \_\_\_\_\_

- This treatment is often used
  - To treat soft, brittle bones (osteoporosis)
  - For bone growth
  - To treat or prevent bone loss in patients getting certain treatments for cancer
  - To prevent bone fractures in patients with cancer that has spread to the bones
  - To treat high calcium levels in patients with cancer
- It may also be used for other reasons.

**Goal of Treatment:** \_\_\_\_\_

- Treatment may continue for a certain time period or until side effects are no longer controlled.

## Treatment Regimen

Treatment Name	How the Treatment Works	How the Treatment is Given
Zoledronic Acid (ZOH-leh-DRAH-nik A-sid): Zometa (zoh-MEH-tuh), Reclast (REE-klast)	Slows down cells that help break down bones, which slows down bone loss and makes your bones stronger.	Infusion given into a vein.

**Treatment Administration and Schedule:** Treatment schedules can be different for everyone, with some needing treatment every 3 or 4 weeks and others every 1 to 2 years. Talk with your care team about your treatment schedule.

**Appointments:** Appointments may include regular check-ups with your care team, treatment appointments, lab visits, and imaging tests. It's important to keep your appointments whenever you can. If you miss any appointments, call your care provider as soon as possible to reschedule your appointment.

## Supportive Care to Prevent and Treat Side Effects

Description	Supportive Care Given at the Clinic or Hospital	Supportive Care Taken at Home
To help prevent or treat flu-like symptoms	_____ _____	_____ _____
To help prevent low levels of calcium in the blood (calcium and vitamin D supplements)	_____ _____	_____ _____

## Common Side Effects

Side Effect	Important Information
Nausea and Vomiting	<p>Description: Nausea is an uncomfortable feeling in your stomach or the need to throw up. This may or may not cause vomiting.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eat smaller, more frequent meals.</li> <li>• Avoid fatty, fried, spicy, or highly sweet foods.</li> <li>• Eat bland foods at room temperature and drink clear liquids.</li> <li>• If you vomit, start with small amounts of water, broth, or other clear liquids when you are ready to eat again. If that stays down, then try soft foods (such as gelatin, plain cornstarch pudding, yogurt, strained soup, or strained cooked cereal). Slowly work up to eating solid food.</li> <li>• Your care team may prescribe medicine for these symptoms.</li> </ul> <p>Talk to your care team if you have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vomiting for more than 24 hours</li> <li>• Vomiting that's nonstop</li> <li>• Signs of dehydration (like feeling very thirsty, having a dry mouth, feeling dizzy, or having dark urine)</li> <li>• Blood or coffee-ground-like appearance in your vomit</li> <li>• Bad stomach pain that doesn't go away after vomiting</li> </ul>
Constipation	<p>Description: Constipation means having a hard time passing stools or not going to the bathroom often. Your stools might feel hard and dry, which can make you uncomfortable or hurt.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep track of how many times you move your bowels every day.</li> <li>• Drink 8 to 10 glasses of water or other fluids each day, unless your care team tells you otherwise.</li> <li>• Exercise regularly.</li> <li>• Eat high-fiber foods like raw fruits and vegetables.</li> <li>• Your care team may recommend medicine (such as polyethylene glycol 3350 or senna) for constipation.</li> </ul> <p>Talk to your care team if you have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constipation that lasts 3 or more days</li> <li>• Constipation after 48 hours, even after using a laxative</li> </ul>

Fatigue	<p>Description: Fatigue is a constant and sometimes strong feeling of tiredness.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Routine exercise has been shown to decrease levels of fatigue. Work with your care team to find the right type of exercise for you.</li> <li>• Ask your family and friends for help with daily tasks and emotional support.</li> <li>• Try healthy ways to feel better, like meditation, writing in a journal, doing yoga, and using guided imagery to lower anxiety and feel good.</li> <li>• Make a regular sleep schedule and limit naps during the day so you can sleep better at night, aiming for 7 to 8 hours of sleep.</li> <li>• Don't use heavy machines or do things that need your full attention if you're very tired to avoid accidents.</li> </ul> <p>Talk to your care team if you have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tiredness that affects your daily life</li> <li>• Tiredness all the time, and it doesn't get better with rest</li> <li>• Dizziness and weakness, along with being tired</li> </ul>
Flu-Like Symptoms	<p>Zoledronic acid can lead to what's called an "acute phase reaction," which may cause flu-like symptoms, including tiredness, muscle or joint pain, bone pain, fever, and chills. These symptoms usually happen within the first 3 days after treatment.</p> <p>Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your care team may suggest taking a medicine like acetaminophen or ibuprofen before and after your infusion to help reduce the risk of getting flu-like symptoms.</li> </ul> <p>Talk to your care team if you have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fever</li> <li>• Chills</li> <li>• Muscle or joint pain</li> <li>• Bone pain</li> <li>• Tiredness</li> </ul>

## Select Rare Side Effects

Side Effect	Talk to Your Care Team if You Have Any of These Signs or Symptoms	
Low Blood Calcium	<p>Make sure you get enough calcium and vitamin D to help prevent or treat low calcium levels. It's recommended to have 1,000 mg of calcium and at least 400 units of vitamin D daily. If you aren't getting enough from your food, consider taking supplements to help meet these needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Muscle cramps or spasms</li> <li>Numbness and tingling</li> <li>Seizures</li> </ul>	
Osteonecrosis of the Jaw (ONJ)	<p>ONJ is a rare but serious condition where the bone cells in your jaw die, causing the jawbone to stick out through an opening in your gums. Since blood can't get to the exposed part, more of the bone dies. Your care team may recommend that you see a dentist before starting therapy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jaw swelling or pain</li> <li>Loose teeth or toothache</li> <li>Mouth sores</li> <li>Pus-like discharge in your gums and mouth</li> </ul>	
Bone Fracture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sharp pain that worsens with movement</li> <li>Swelling or bruising around the broken bone</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Difficulty moving or bearing weight on the injured area</li> <li>Limb that looks crooked, bent, or shorter than the other side</li> </ul>
Muscle and Joint Pain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Muscle or joint pain and swelling</li> <li>Weakness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher</li> <li>Red-brown urine</li> </ul>
Kidney Problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decrease in your amount of urine</li> <li>Blood in your urine</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Swelling of your ankles</li> <li>Loss of appetite</li> </ul>

**Before starting treatment, ask your care team when to call 9-1-1 or seek emergency help.**  
**If you experience any new, worsening, or uncontrolled side effects, contact your care team immediately.**

## Intimacy, Pregnancy, and Breastfeeding

- Treatment may **change how you feel about intimacy and your body**. However, physical closeness—such as holding hands and hugging—remains safe. It is common to have questions about intimacy. If needed, talk to your care team for guidance.
- Treatment may **harm an unborn baby**.
  - If you are able to become pregnant, take a pregnancy test before starting treatment.
  - Use an effective method of birth control during treatment and for 12 months after your last dose.
  - If you think you might be pregnant or if you become pregnant, tell your care team right away.
  - If your partner(s) could become pregnant, use an effective method of birth control—such as condoms—during treatment and for 12 months after your last dose.
- Do NOT breastfeed** during treatment.

## Additional Information

- **Tell your care team about all the medicines you take.**  
This includes prescriptions, over-the-counter drugs, vitamins, and herbal products. Before starting any new medicine, supplement, or vaccine, ask your care team first.
- Treatment may cause **breathing problems** in people with **aspirin-sensitive asthmas**.
- **This Patient Education Sheet may not describe all possible side effects.**  
Call your healthcare provider for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to the FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

## Notes

Updated Date: December 15, 2025

Scan the QR code below to access this education sheet.



Important notice: The Association of Cancer Care Centers (ACCC), Hematology/Oncology Pharmacy Association (HOPA), Network for Collaborative Oncology Development & Advancement, Inc. (NCODA), and Oncology Nursing Society (ONS) have collaborated in gathering information for and developing this patient education guide. This guide represents a brief summary of the medication derived from information provided by the drug manufacturer and other resources.

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