Royal Cornwall Hospitals
NHS Trust

# Alendronic acid, calcium and vitamin D

## Information for patients










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## What is Alendronic acid?

Alendronic acid is a drug used for the treatment of osteoporosis. It works by slowing down the production of the cells that wear down bone (osteoclasts). This helps to improve bone strength and makes the bone less fragile.

## How do I take it?

When and how you take Alendronic acid can affect whether it will work or not. It is very important that you follow these instructions exactly.

- Take your Alendronic acid tablet once a week (on the same day every week), first thing in the morning on an empty stomach with a large glass of tap water.
- Swallow the tablet whole.
- Never chew, crush or suck the tablet as this can cause side effects such as mouth ulcers and heartburn.
- Stay upright for the next 30 minutes. This is so the tablet stays in your stomach and it also reduces the risk of indigestion. You could choose an upright activity such as taking a shower (but try not to bend down to pick anything up), or sitting in a chair and reading or watching television.

**Do not:**

- eat anything for at least 30 minutes, including taking any other medication. This will stop the treatment working and your bones will not be protected.
- take Alendronic acid with: tea, coffee, juice, squash or even bottled water – it will not be absorbed properly and won't be effective in protecting your bones.

## How to take calcium and vitamin D

You have also been advised to take calcium and vitamin D, as you do not have enough calcium in your diet. Calcium and vitamin D are very important as they are the nutrients your bone needs to make sure the Alendronic acid will work effectively. Calcium gives your bones strength and rigidity. Vitamin D is needed to help your body absorb calcium.

Take the calcium and vitamin D at the same time every day, but not within 4 hours of taking the Alendronic acid. If you have been advised to take it twice a day then this should be at lunchtime and dinnertime. If you are just taking it once a day, choose one of these mealtimes. You can take the calcium and vitamin D either before you start eating or after you have finished.

## Getting your prescription

It is important you continue with this medication for at least the next five years. You will need to make sure that you get the Alendronic acid, calcium and vitamin D put on your repeat prescription and order it well in advance every month.

If you have any problems with your medication – contact your GP to discuss alternative medication.

If you would like this leaflet in large print, braille, audio version or in another language, please contact the General Office on 01872 252690

**RCHT 2052**
© RCHT Design & Publications 2023
Printed 12/2023 V1 **Review due 12/2026**