

Fosamax

If you have questions about Fosamax or other medications for your MG, please contact the Myasthenia Gravis Association of Western Pennsylvania at (412-566-1545).

Fosamax (FOSS-ah-max) is a medication used for the treatment of osteoporosis and Paget's Disease of the bone. Its generic name is alendronate (a-LEN-dro-nate) sodium. A generic form is not available.

Fosamax works by decreasing the thinning of bones since it reduces the cell activity that causes bone loss. It also increased the density of bones which reduces the risk of fractures. These activities will continue as long as the medication is taken.

Fosamax should be taken:

- **first thing in the morning**
- **on an empty stomach**
- **with 6 to 8 oz. of water**
- **at least 30 minutes before eating, drinking, or taking other medications**

For the best absorption possible it is extremely important to follow the above guidelines. An empty stomach is needed for absorption. A 6 to 8 ounce glass of plain water, not mineral water or another liquid, is needed for the uncoated tablet to reach the stomach and absorption to start. Any food, medication or other liquid taken before the 30 minute waiting period will lessen the effectiveness of Fosamax by decreasing absorption. Waiting longer than 30 minutes will increase its effectiveness. It is better not to lie down for 30 minutes so that the tablet can reach the stomach and to reduce irritation of the esophagus. If a dose is missed in the morning, it is better to wait until the following day to take the regular dose – not an increased dose.

While taking Fosamax, it is important to have an adequate intake of calcium and vitamin D. Supplements of calcium and vitamin D are needed in the requirements aren't met by diet. Discuss the need for vitamin supplements with your doctor.

Side effects are usually mild and don't require Fosamax to be discontinued. The side effects may be: abdominal pain, nausea, heartburn, constipation, diarrhea, gas irritation in the esophagus, vomiting, difficulty swallowing, bloating, muscle/bone pain and an altered sense of taste. Rarely, a rash may occur.

Fosamax should not be taken by patients who have severe kidney disorders. Patients with a low level of calcium in their blood should have this corrected before starting Fosamax. Pregnant or Nursing women should discuss this medication with their physician.

The recommended dosage to treat osteoporosis is 10mg each day or 70mg once a week. For Paget's Disease, 40mg each day is recommended.

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