

Information about
Denosumab (Prolia)



What is Osteoporosis and why do you need treatment?

Osteoporosis is a condition where your bones thin and are more likely to break. 1 in 2 women and 1 in 5 men over 50 suffer from this. Having osteoporosis means that you are more likely to break (fracture) bones. If you have already broken a bone, you are 2 to 3 times more likely to break another bone.

Your Doctor recommends that we treat you with Denosumab because of your risk of breaking a bone in the future.

What is Denosumab (60mgs)?

Denosumab is an antibody which is a chemical that attaches to proteins using the immune mechanisms.

Denosumab:

- slows down bone loss and bone thinning,
- helps to rebuild bones and
- reduces the risk of broken bones (fractures).

How will we give you Denosumab?

Denosumab is given as a subcutaneous (under the skin) injection every 6 months, the usual dose is 60 mgs, and for some people this can be given at your GP surgery. Each time before you receive Denosumab, you should have a blood test to check the amount of calcium in your blood.

After your first injection we may recommend that we check the amount of calcium in your blood after 2 weeks.

Denosumab is normally prescribed for a number of years and unlike other treatment for osteoporosis, the effect of Denosumab appears to wear off around 6 months or so after last injection. Therefore it is important to continue with treatment on a 6 monthly basis. We recommend that you do not stop this treatment unless your Doctor or Nurse Specialist at the Bone clinic tells you otherwise, as there might be a possibility of a slightly increase in the risk of fracture for a short time after stopping treatment.

Are there any side effects?

As with all medicines, some people may develop side effects when they receive this treatment. A low level of calcium in your body is a rare side effect. However if you develop muscle spasms or tingling in your hands or face you should get urgent medical attention by contacting your GP or NHS 24 on 111.

The most common other side effects are an increased risk of infections'. Please tell us of any infections you have had at your next visit. Other common side effects include constipation, rash, sciatica and limb pain. If you develop any redness or swelling around your injection site, please tell your GP.

A rare side effect seen in people taking Denosumab and other treatments for osteoporosis treatments is the occurrence of a stress fracture (break) in the thigh bone (femur). The longer you take Denosumab, the higher the risk that this may happen. If you develop any persistent thigh pain whilst receiving Denosumab, please tell your GP.

Another possible rare side effect with the use of Denosumab is a condition called osteonecrosis of the jaw (ONJ). This is an extremely rare jaw problem in which there is delayed healing of the jaw (usually following invasive dental procedures), and this may result in some exposure of the jaw bone through the gums and therefore a risk of infection.

Although rare, ONJ is more likely to happen if you have poor dental health or after dental procedures such as tooth extractions or root canal treatments. ONJ may also be more common if you have diabetes and, or you are on corticosteroid tablets. Therefore if you have not had a dental check up in the last 6 months, please arrange to do so before starting Denosumab. Please tell your dentist at your next visit that you receive Denosumab injections.

If you have had a recent (or are about to have) a tooth removed or root canal treatment you should delay starting Denosumab for 3 months until your gum heals.

If you are planning to become pregnant or become pregnant or are breastfeeding please discuss with your GP or with the staff at the Bone Metabolism Clinic.

Do I need any other treatment for Osteoporosis?

Most patients who are treated with Denosumab also need calcium and vitamin D supplements. We may advise some patients to take a diet rich in calcium and to take vitamin D supplements. Occasionally we may give you tablets containing high strength vitamin D several weeks before the injection.

Lifestyle advice

- Eat a healthy balanced diet
- Take regular exercise
- Stop smoking
- Drink alcohol within the recommended amounts (No more than 14 units per week for men and women).

More information about osteoporosis and a fact sheet about the use of Denosumab injection are available from:

The National Osteoporosis Society
Camberton
Bath BA2 0PJ

Website: www.nos.org.uk

Helpline: **0808 800 0035**

Email: info@nos.org.uk

If you have any further questions, then please speak to one of the doctors or nurse specialists in the Bone Metabolism Unit.