



BC Cancer Agency
CARE + RESEARCH
An agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority

For the Patient: Denosumab injection
Other names: XGEVA®

- **Denosumab** (*den oh' sue mab*) is a drug that is used to reduce the risk of broken bones or bone pain related to your cancer. It is a monoclonal antibody, a type of protein designed to target and interfere with the growth of cancer cells. It is a clear liquid that is injected under the skin.
- Tell your doctor if you have ever had an unusual or **allergic reaction** to denosumab before receiving denosumab.
- A **blood test** may be taken before each treatment. The dose and timing of your treatment may be changed based on the test results and/or other side effects.
- If you **miss a dose** of denosumab, call your doctor during office hours to ask about making up the missed dose. Continue to schedule your doses every 4 weeks from the date of your last injection.
- Other drugs may **interact** with denosumab. Check with your doctor or pharmacist before you start or stop taking any other drugs.
- The **drinking of alcohol** (in small amounts) does not appear to affect the safety or usefulness of denosumab.
- Denosumab may harm the baby if used during pregnancy. It is best to use **birth control** while being treated with denosumab. Tell your doctor right away if you or your partner becomes pregnant. Do not breastfeed during treatment.
- **Tell** doctors, dentists, and other health professionals that you are being treated with denosumab before you receive any treatment from them.
- Your doctor may tell you to take calcium and vitamin D to help prevent low calcium levels in your blood while you take denosumab. Take these supplements exactly as directed.

Side effects are listed in the following table in the order in which they may occur. Tips to help manage the side effects are included.

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
Nausea may occur after your treatment.	<p>You may be given a prescription for antinausea drug(s) to take before your treatment and/or at home. It is easier to prevent nausea than treat it once it has occurred, so follow directions closely.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drink plenty of fluids. • Eat and drink often in small amounts. • Try the ideas in <i>Food Choices to Help Control Nausea</i>.*
Fever may sometimes occur.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take acetaminophen (e.g., TYLENOL®) every 4-6 hours, to a maximum of 4 g (4000 mg) per day. • If you have fever (over 100°F or 38°C by an oral thermometer) plus another sign of infection, call your doctor immediately. Other signs of infection include chills, cough, or burning when you pass urine.
Diarrhea may sometimes occur.	<p>If diarrhea is a problem:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drink plenty of fluids. • Eat and drink often in small amounts. • Avoid high fibre foods as outlined in <i>Food Ideas to Help with Diarrhea During Chemotherapy</i>.*
Constipation may sometimes occur.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise if you can. • Drink plenty of fluids. • Try ideas in <i>Suggestions for Dealing with Constipation</i>.*
Increased bone pain may sometimes occur.	<p>You may take acetaminophen (e.g., TYLENOL®) every 4-6 hours to a maximum of 4 g (4000 mg) per day or ibuprofen (e.g., ADVIL®) for mild to moderate pain. Tell your doctor if the pain interferes with your activity.</p>
Headache, muscle, or joint pain may sometimes occur.	<p>You may take acetaminophen (e.g., TYLENOL®) every 4-6 hours to a maximum of 4 g (4000 mg) per day or ibuprofen (e.g., ADVIL®) for mild to moderate pain. Tell your doctor if the pain interferes with your activity.</p>

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
Swelling of hands, feet, or lower legs may sometimes occur if your body retains extra fluid.	If swelling is a problem: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elevate your feet when sitting. • Avoid tight clothing.
You may sometimes have trouble sleeping .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk to your doctor if you continue to have trouble sleeping. • This will return to normal when you stop receiving denosumab.
Weight changes can sometimes occur.	Try the ideas in <i>High Energy, High Protein Ideas*</i> for food ideas to help with decreased appetite.
Tiredness and lack of energy may sometimes occur.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not drive a car or operate machinery if you are feeling tired. • Try the ideas in <i>Your Bank to Energy Savings: Helping People with Cancer Handle Fatigue.*</i>
Hair loss is rare with denosumab. If you lose hair, it will grow back once you stop treatment with denosumab. Colour and texture may change.	If hair loss is a problem, refer to <i>For the Patient: Hair Loss Due to Chemotherapy.*</i>
Problems with the jaw bone may rarely occur.	For information about dental care, refer to <i>For the Patient: Bisphosphonates and Oral Health.*</i>

***Please ask your chemotherapy nurse or pharmacist for a copy.**

SEE YOUR DOCTOR OR GET EMERGENCY HELP IMMEDIATELY IF YOU HAVE:

- Signs of an **infection** such as fever (over 100°F or 38°C by an oral thermometer), shaking chills; severe sore throat, productive cough (coughing up thick or green sputum); cloudy or foul smelling urine; painful, tender, or swollen red skin wounds or sores.
- Signs of a **blood clot** such as tenderness or hardness over a vein, calf swelling and tenderness, sudden onset of cough, chest pain, or shortness of breath.
- Signs of **heart or lung problems** such as fast or uneven heartbeat, chest pain, chest pressure, shortness of breath or difficulty in breathing, swelling of feet or lower legs, or fainting.

SEE YOUR DOCTOR AS SOON AS POSSIBLE (DURING OFFICE HOURS) IF YOU HAVE:

- Signs of **low blood calcium** such as abdominal cramps, confusion and muscle spasms.
- Signs of **anemia** such as unusual tiredness or weakness.
- **Pain** in your mouth, teeth or jaw.

