



Provincial Health Services Authority

**For the Patient: Zoledronic acid**  
Other names: ZOMETA®

- **Zoledronic acid** (zoe' le dron ik as' id) is a drug that is used to treat some types of cancer. It is also used to treat cancer which has spread into the bones (bone metastases) and to treat the increased amount of calcium in the blood (hypercalcemia) that may occur with some kinds of cancer. It is a clear liquid that is injected into a vein.
- Tell your doctor if you have ever had an unusual or **allergic reaction** to zoledronic acid (ZOMETA®, ACLASTA®), pamidronate (AREDIA®), or clodronate (BONEFOS®, OSTAC®, CLASTEON®) before receiving zoledronic acid.
- 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.
- **Other drugs may interact** with zoledronic acid. Check with your doctor or pharmacist before you start or stop taking any other drugs.
- If you are receiving zoledronic acid for **increased blood calcium**, other drugs such as corticosteroids (e.g., dexamethasone, prednisone), phosphate supplements, vitamin D, calcitonin, and diuretics such as furosemide (LASIX®) may **interact** with zoledronic acid. Tell your doctor if you are taking these or any other drugs as you may need extra blood tests or your dose may need to be changed. 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 zoledronic acid.
- Zoledronic acid may damage sperm and may harm the baby if used during pregnancy. It is best to use **birth control** while being treated with zoledronic acid. 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 zoledronic acid before you receive any treatment from them.

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
<p><b>Allergic reactions</b> may rarely occur. Signs of an allergic reaction may include flushing, rash, itching, dizziness, swelling or breathing problems. This can occur immediately or several hours after receiving zoledronic acid.</p>	<p>Tell your nurse if this happens while you are receiving zoledronic acid or contact your oncologist <b>immediately</b> if this happens after you leave the clinic.</p>
<p><b>Pain or tenderness</b> may occur where the needle was placed.</p>	<p>Apply cool compresses or soak in cool water for 15-20 minutes several times a day.</p>
<p><b>Nausea</b> does not usually occur with zoledronic acid.</p>	
<p>A <b>flu-like illness</b> may sometimes occur shortly after your treatment. You may have fever, chills, headache, muscle aches, and joint aches. Flu-like symptoms usually disappear on their own.</p>	<p>Take acetaminophen (e.g., TYLENOL®) every 4-6 hours if needed, to a maximum of 4 g (4000 mg) per day.</p>
<p><b>Diarrhea</b> may sometimes occur.</p>	<p>If diarrhea is a problem:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drink plenty of fluids.</li> <li>• Eat and drink often in small amounts.</li> <li>• Avoid high fibre foods as outlined in <i>Food Choices to Help Manage Diarrhea</i>.*</li> </ul>
<p><b>Constipation</b> may sometimes occur.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exercise if you can.</li> <li>• Drink plenty of fluids.</li> <li>• Try ideas in <i>Food Choices to Manage Constipation</i>.*</li> </ul>
<p>Problems with the <b>jaw bone</b> may rarely occur.</p>	<p>Refer to patient information handouts: <i>Bisphosphonates and Oral Health</i>* or <i>Bisphosphonates and Oral Health in Multiple Myeloma</i>.*</p>
<p><b>Muscle, joint, or back pain</b> may sometimes occur.</p>	<p>You may take acetaminophen (e.g., TYLENOL®) every 4-6 hours to a maximum of 4 g (4000 mg) per day. Tell your doctor if the pain interferes with your activity.</p>
<p><b>Tiredness</b> and lack of energy may sometimes occur.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not drive a car or operate machinery if you are feeling tired.</li> <li>• Try the ideas in <i>Fatigue/Tiredness – Patient Handout</i> or <i>Your Bank to Energy Savings: Helping People with Cancer Handle Fatigue</i>.*</li> </ul>

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

