



Pills or Poisons & Atomic Habits

Drug therapy can help prevent and treat low bone mass and osteoporosis

Some drugs can help to prevent future bone loss or increase bone mass by slowing the breakdown of bone tissue and reducing fracture risk! If you have low bone mass or osteoporosis and moderate-high fracture risk, drug therapy is recommended.



Did you know?

Your hip and knee region bone mineral density can drop **40%** within the first two years after a spinal cord injury



1. Should I get a drug therapy?



Do you have Low Bone Mass or Osteoporosis and Moderate- High fracture risk?

No

Yes

Consult with your doctor if drug therapy is a beneficial approach for you to prevent bone loss.



Consider starting drug therapy.



2. How should my drug therapy plan be decided?



Several factors will influence your choice of drug, and length of therapy.

- Your treatment preference (e.g. Oral, Under the skin injection or IV).
- Your risk of side effect(s).
- Your response to drug therapy and the side effect you experienced.
- Cost (e.g. Some drugs may not be covered by your health plan).

3. What drug therapies are available?

Drug name (Bland names)	How to take	Most common side effect *
Alendronate (Fosamax®)	Daily or weekly pill	Stomach upset, nausea, diarrhea, heartburn
Risedronate (Actonel®)	Daily, a weekly or monthly pill	
Zoledronic acid (Aclasta®, Reclast®)	Once a year IV injection (You may need to take it more often depending on your fracture risk.)	Fever or flu like symptoms short term after infusion
Denosumab (Prolia®)	Twice a year injection under the skin	Skin irritations (itching, redness and/or dryness)
Teriparatide (Forteo®)	Daily injection under the skin	Leg cramps, nausea, dizziness

*Possible side effect of most of the drug therapies include jawbone death, broken thigh bone and abnormal heart rhythm.

4. How do I know my drug is working?

Your doctor can see if your bone mineral density is staying the same or going up or down with a DXA or pQCT test every 1 to 3 years. This test can assess the effectiveness of your treatment. (See Episode 4)



To Do List

Drug Therapy For Bone Health

- Ensure an adequate dietary calcium intake and vitamin D supplement intake while taking drugs for low bone mass or osteoporosis. (See Episode 5)
- To prevent bone loss, consult with your doctor about appropriate therapies for you.
- If you have low bone mass or osteoporosis and moderate-high fracture risk, consider starting drug therapy.
- Stick to your treatment plan once prescribed. Let your doctor know if you stop taking your medication.
- Re-assess (stop, continue, or change) your drug therapy with your doctor once a year.



There Are Drugs Available To Prevent And Treat Bone Mineral Density Decline. Talk To Your Doctor About The Best Drug For You.

Learn More

SCI Fragments:
www.scifragments.ca



The information contained in these handouts & podcast are not intended to replace medical advice. Readers are advised to discuss their individual circumstances with their doctor & rehab care team.

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