

Alendronate

- Keep this leaflet safe, as you may need to refer to it again.
- Please ask your vet or veterinary nurse if you have any further questions.
- This medicine has been prescribed for your pet ONLY. Do not take it yourself or give it to another person or any other animal; it may harm them even if their symptoms appear to be the same.

The medicine you have been given for your dog or cat is called alendronate or alendronic acid. It may have a trade name such as Fosamax[®], but often will just be called alendronate.

What is alendronate?

Alendronate belongs to a group of medicines called bisphosphonates. These drugs lower blood calcium concentrations by stopping the release of calcium from bones.

Why has my pet been prescribed alendronate?

Alendronate is used to lower blood calcium concentrations when these are too high. It stops bone-dissolving cells (osteoclasts) within the bone from working. Alendronate is also used to control the pain caused by certain bone diseases such as bone cancers.

How should I store alendronate?

This medicine should be stored at room temperature and away from excess heat and moisture. For safety, **all medicines should be kept out of the reach and sight of children.**

How do I give alendronate tablets or solution to my pet?

Try to disguise the tablets in a small quantity of strongly flavoured food that your pet likes. Alternatively, the tablets can be placed carefully on the back of your pet's tongue and their mouth held closed until the entire dose has been swallowed. Administering a small volume of water by syringe after the tablet helps ensure that it passes into the stomach. The solution can be gently squirted behind the large canine tooth with the pet's mouth held firmly closed. Ensure that plenty of fresh water is available.

How long will my pet need to take alendronate?

Your vet will advise you on the length of time for which you will need to give this medicine. This may vary between patients. Do not stop giving alendronate to your pet unless advised to do so by your vet.

What should I do if I run out of tablets?

Try not to run out. Make sure you order more alendronate from your vet if your supply is getting low. Missing a dose may cause signs of your pet's disease to return. If you do run out, contact your own vet for further advice and restart the course as soon as possible.

What should I do if I miss a dose?

If a dose is missed, give the medication as soon as possible. However, it is best to skip the missed dose if it is almost time for your pet's next scheduled dose. **DO NOT** give a double dose to make up for the missed dose and do not exceed the stated dose in any one 24-hour period.

What should I do if my pet is accidentally given too many doses?

Contact your vet immediately if your pet receives an overdose of alendronate as higher doses increase the risk of side effects.

Can my pet take alendronate if I am already giving them other drugs?

Tell your vet if you are giving your pet any other medications, even if you think they know. This includes herbal and off-the-shelf remedies from a pet shop, pharmacy or health store. In particular, any form of calcium or vitamin supplement can increase the strength of alendronate's effect. Drugs such as aspirin and other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs are likely to increase the risk of stomach ulcers so should not be given alongside alendronate.

What are the possible side effects of alendronate for my pet?

Alendronate may cause vomiting and stomach ulcers, which may lead to abdominal discomfort, and a reduction in your pet's appetite. In people, alendronate can cause bones to become soft and painful. Alendronate may cause blood calcium levels to become too low, which will cause poor appetite, twitching of the face or ears, hiccups or teeth grinding and then collapse or fitting. If your pet shows *any* unusual symptoms whilst taking this medication, please contact your vet.

What should I do if my pet is unwell while taking alendronate?

If your pet is unwell while receiving medication, you should contact your vet as soon as possible for advice. You should not give further doses until you have spoken to your vet.

The Prescribing Cascade

This medicine is authorized for use in human patients and is used by vets under the 'prescribing cascade'. The medicine is not authorized by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD), an executive agency of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), for use in dogs/cats/pets. Your vet can explain the 'prescribing cascade' in further detail to you and also explain why they are prescribing this drug for your pet. You will be asked to sign a consent form stating that you understand the reasons that the drug is being prescribed and its possible complications, before the treatment is issued.

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What should I do if a person accidentally takes this drug?

If a person accidentally takes your pet's medicine, the person should be taken to the local hospital **immediately**. Take this leaflet and any remaining tablets plus their container (even if it is empty) with you.

Whom do I contact if I want to know more?

If you have any questions about this drug or concerns about your pet's health, contact your own vet. They will know your pet's medical history and will know about alendronate.