

PATIENT MEDICATION INFORMATION :

FOSAMAX[®] 

alendronate sodium

Bone Metabolism Regulator

Organon

Date of Revision: July 16, 2021

READ THIS FOR SAFE AND EFFECTIVE USE OF YOUR MEDICINE

Read this carefully before you start taking **FOSAMAX** and each time you get a refill. This leaflet is a summary and will not tell you everything about this drug. Talk to your healthcare professional about your medical condition and treatment and ask if there is any new information about **FOSAMAX**.

What is FOSAMAX used for?

FOSAMAX is used in adults to treat osteoporosis in men and postmenopausal women. Osteoporosis is a thinning and weakening of the bones. FOSAMAX helps to rebuild bone and makes bone less likely to fracture.

FOSAMAX is not for use in children under 18 years of age.

How does FOSAMAX work?

FOSAMAX contains a medicinal ingredient called alendronate sodium. Alendronate sodium belongs to a class of non-hormonal drugs called bisphosphonates. The bisphosphonates are similar to a molecule naturally made in your body that will break down bone tissue. Alendronate binds to the receptors in your body to prevent the bone from breaking down. This process also helps rebuild bone.

What are the ingredients in FOSAMAX?

Medicinal ingredients: alendronate sodium.

Non-medicinal ingredients: Anhydrous lactose, croscarmellose sodium, magnesium stearate and microcrystalline cellulose.

FOSAMAX comes in the following dosage forms:

Tablet 70 mg.

Do not use FOSAMAX if you:

- Have certain disorders of the esophagus (the tube that connects your mouth with your stomach)
- Are unable to stand or sit upright for at least 30 minutes.
- Are allergic to alendronate sodium any other ingredients in FOSAMAX. If you are not sure about this, talk to your healthcare professional before taking FOSAMAX.
- Have low blood calcium.
- Have SEVERE kidney disease. If you have any doubts if this applies to you, speak to your physician.

To help avoid side effects and ensure proper use, talk to your healthcare professional before you take FOSAMAX. Talk about any health conditions or problems you may have, including if you:

- have low blood calcium or a condition that affects your ability to absorb minerals (i.e. Vitamin D deficiency). This condition must be treated before you begin treatment with FOSAMAX. Your doctor will monitor your condition during your treatment. You should consume a sufficient amount of calcium and Vitamin D if you are already receiving glucocorticoids medicines. Speak to your doctor if you experience muscle spasms or nerve problems (i.e. abnormal tingling or prickling sensations).
- have digestive problems. These may include difficulty swallowing, esophagus diseases, ulcers, inflammation of the first part of the small intestines, and inflammation of the lining of the stomach.
- may be at risk of developing osteonecrosis (bone damage in the jaw). Speak to your doctor if you have a planned dental extraction. Your doctor may request a dental check-up before starting FOSAMAX. You may also be at risk of causing bone damage to your jaw if you:
 - have cancer
 - have or had poor dental health, gum or teeth disease
 - have poor oral hygiene, dentures that do not fit well
 - have anemia (low red blood cell count)
 - have infection
 - have a blood disorder where your blood cannot form clots in the normal way
 - have diabetes (high blood sugar)
 - get chemotherapy, or radiotherapy
 - take corticosteroids, or immunosuppressive drugs
 - take angiogenesis inhibitors; they are drugs that slow down the growth of new blood vessels and are used mostly to treat cancer (e.g. bevacizumab)
 - are or have been a smoker
 - are a heavy alcohol user
- have or have had any medical problems including known kidney disease.
- have any allergies.

Other warnings you should know about:

Gastrointestinal Problems:

Taking FOSAMAX incorrectly may cause you to experience problems with your esophagus. Stop taking FOSAMAX and speak to your doctor if you experience difficulty or pain upon swallowing, chest/breastbone pain or new or worsening heartburn. To avoid problems with your esophagus and allow the drug to reach the stomach, consider the following instructions:

- swallow each tablet of FOSAMAX with a full glass of water.
- do NOT chew or suck the tablet.
- do NOT lie down for at least 30 minutes and until your first meal of the day.
- do NOT take FOSAMAX at bedtime or before starting your day.

Muscle and skeletal problems:

Drugs such as FOSAMAX may cause serious bone, joint or muscle pain. You may experience relief from these symptoms after you end your treatment. Long term treatment with FOSAMAX may cause stress fractures (repetitive trauma) or low energy fractures (falls from standing). Your doctor will:

- evaluate your condition if they suspect you have developed a fracture
- examine the cause of the stress fracture and provide appropriate care

- pause your treatment depending on your condition.

Eye problems:

Drugs such as FOSAMAX may cause vision problems. Different parts of your eye may experience inflammation or you may develop an eye infection. Your doctor may end your treatment if they identify symptoms of inflammation.

Bone damage in ear:

Treatment with FOSAMX may cause bone damage in your ear. Talk to your doctor if you have ear pain and/or discharge from the ear while taking FOSAMAX.

Use in pregnancy and breast-feeding:

Do not take Fosamax if you are pregnant or breast feeding.

Lifestyle changes:

Consult with your doctor about lifestyle changes when taking FOSOMAX. These may include changes to your diet, use of dietary supplements, exercising and stop smoking.

Driving and using machines:

Before you do tasks that may require special attention, wait until you know how you respond to FOSAMAX. There have been side effects reported with FOSAMAX that may affect your ability to drive or operate machinery.

Tell your healthcare professional about all the medicines you take, including any drugs, vitamins, minerals, natural supplements or alternative medicines.

The following may interact with FOSAMAX:

- Calcium supplements, antacids, and other oral medications will interfere with the absorption of FOSAMAX if they are taken at the same time. You must wait at least half an hour after taking FOSAMAX before taking any other oral medication.
- Intravenous ranitidine
- herbal products, food and beverages other than plain water may impact your ability to absorb FOSAMAX. Wait at least half an hour after taking FOSAMAX before you take any herbal products, food or beverages.

How to take FOSAMAX:

- Always take FOSAMAX exactly as your doctor or pharmacist has told you. Check with your doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure.
- It is important that you continue taking FOSAMAX for as long as your doctor prescribes it.
- Your doctor may ask you to take calcium and vitamin D while you are on FOSAMAX therapy.

Usual dose:

Take one FOSAMAX tablet once a week.

Follow these instructions carefully:

1. Choose the day of the week that best fits your schedule. Every week, take one tablet of FOSAMAX on your chosen day.

2. After getting up for the day and before taking your first food, beverage, or other medication, swallow your FOSAMAX tablet only with plain water (200 to 250 mL). **Do NOT chew or suck on the tablet.** To make sure FOSAMAX is absorbed by your body, do **NOT** take FOSAMAX with:
 - mineral water
 - coffee or tea
 - juice

If your normal drinking water is classified as “hard water”, you should consider taking this medication with distilled water (i.e., not mineral water).

3. After taking your FOSAMAX, do not lie down - stay fully upright (sitting, standing or walking) for at least 30 minutes and do not lie down until after your first food of the day.
4. Do NOT take FOSAMAX at bedtime or before getting up for the day. This will help FOSAMAX:
 - reach your stomach quickly and;
 - reduce the potential for irritation of your esophagus (the tube that connects your mouth with your stomach).
5. After taking your FOSAMAX, wait at least 30 minutes before taking your first food, beverage, or other medication of the day. This includes antacids, calcium supplements and vitamins. FOSAMAX is effective only if taken when your stomach is empty.
6. If you develop difficulty or pain upon swallowing, chest pain, or new or worsening heartburn, stop taking FOSAMAX immediately and call your doctor.

Overdose:

If you take too much FOSAMAX, drink a full glass of milk and contact your physician immediately. Do not make yourself vomit. Do not lie down.

If you think you, or a person you are caring for, have taken too much FOSAMAX, contact a healthcare professional, hospital emergency department, or regional poison control centre immediately, even if there are no symptoms.

Missed Dose:

If you miss a dose, just take one dose of FOSAMAX on the morning after you remember. Do NOT take two doses on the same day. Return to taking one dose once a week, as originally scheduled on your chosen day.

What are possible side effects from using FOSAMAX?

These are not all the possible side effects you may have when taking FOSAMAX. If you experience any side effects not listed here, tell your healthcare professional.

- digestive problems
 - Acid reflux
 - Bloating feeling in stomach
 - Constipation
 - Diarrhea
 - Excessive gas
 - Nausea
 - Stomach pain
 - Vomiting
- dizziness, spinning sensation or a changed sense of taste
- flu-like symptoms (rarely with fever) and/or generally feeling unwell

- joint swelling or swelling in their hands or legs
- lack or loss of strength
- mouth ulcers have occurred when the tablet was chewed or dissolved in the mouth
- muscle cramps and/or aches
- skin problems
 - Rash that may be made worse by sunlight
 - Hair loss
 - Itchy skin

Serious side effects and what to do about them			
Symptom / effect	Talk to your healthcare professional		Stop taking drug and get immediate medical help
	Only if severe	In all cases	
UNCOMMON			
Allergic reactions such as: - hives - swelling of the face, lips, tongue and/or throat - difficulty in breathing or swallowing			√
Severe bone, joint, and/or muscle pain		√	
New or unusual pain in the hip or thigh		√	
Esophageal inflammation or ulcers causing: - chest pain - heartburn - difficulty or pain upon swallowing			√
Stomach inflammation, stomach or other peptic ulcers occasionally associated with black and/or bloody stools			√
Jaw problems associated with delayed healing and infection, often following tooth extraction			√
Eye inflammation associated with eye pain; eye redness; sensitivity to light, decreased vision			√

Serious side effects and what to do about them			
Symptom / effect	Talk to your healthcare professional		Stop taking drug and get immediate medical help
	Only if severe	In all cases	
Stevens-Johnson syndrome and/or toxic epidermal necrolysis (Severe skin reactions): redness, blistering and/or peeling of large areas of the skin			√
Low blood calcium: - numbness or tingling around the mouth or in the hands or feet - muscle spasms in the face, hands, or feet			√
RARE			
Persistent ear pain		√	

If you have a troublesome symptom or side effect that is not listed here or becomes bad enough to interfere with your daily activities, tell your healthcare professional.

Reporting Side Effects:

Reporting Side Effects:

You can report any suspected side effects associated with the use of health products to Health Canada by:

- Visiting the Web page on [Adverse Reaction Reporting](#) for information on how to report online, by mail or by fax; or
- Calling toll-free at 1-866-234-2345.

Note: Contact your health professional if you need information about how to manage your side effects. The Canada Vigilance Program does not provide medical advice.

Storage:

Store at room temperature (15°C – 30°C).

Do not use this medicine after the month and year written after EXP (expiry date) on the container.

Keep out of reach and sight of children.

If you want more information about FOSAMAX:

- Talk to your healthcare professional.

- Find the full product monograph that is prepared for healthcare professionals and includes this Patient Medication Information by visiting the Health Canada website: (<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/drug-products/drug-product-database.html>); the Organon Canada website (www.organon.ca), or by calling 1-844-820-5468.

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