

# Prolia (denosumab)

## Rheumatology Department Patient Information Leaflet

### Introduction

Prolia (denosumab) is a treatment for post-menopausal osteoporosis.

### What is osteoporosis?

Osteoporosis is a condition that causes gradual weakening of the bones, making them more likely to fracture. The condition mainly affects the elderly and is most common in women after their menopause. Some men may also be affected.

Bone is a living tissue maintained by cells that make new bone and cells that remove old bone. Normally there is a balance of old bone being removed and new bone being formed. As we age, however, loss of old bone may be more than the formation of new bone, causing the bones to thin. This leads to osteoporosis.

Osteoporosis may cause no symptoms at first but it can cause bones to break more easily, especially after a fall. It may also cause loss of height, persistent back pain and a stooping posture.

## What is Prolia?

Prolia is a medicine used to treat osteoporosis. It works by reducing the activity of cells that break down bone. This slows down loss of bone material and can help maintain bone strength.

Although you may not see or feel any difference after taking the medicine, Prolia will help to reduce your risk of fractures.

## How is Prolia taken?

The usual dose of Prolia is 60mg which is contained in a pre-filled syringe. This is given once every six months as a single injection under the skin, either in the upper thighs or abdomen (stomach).

The injections are given by a trained practitioner at your local hospital, clinic or GP surgery. You will be given the first and second injections at the hospital. After that, you will either continue to be given the injections at the hospital or they will be continued at your GP practice.

In order to get the most benefit from Prolia treatment, it is important that you attend your appointments to receive an injection every six months.

**It is vital that you have a blood test two weeks before each injection, and sometimes two weeks after an injection, to check your calcium levels.**

It is your responsibility to have these blood tests. You will need to get a blood form for this from your GP or the Rheumatology Department. In order for us to receive the results from your blood tests, you will have to have them at any of the following centres:

## **Russells Hall Hospital:**

Monday 8am to 7.30pm  
Tuesday 5pm to 7.30pm  
Wednesday 8am to 7.30pm  
Thursday 12noon to 7.30pm  
Friday 12noon to 7.30pm  
Saturday 8am to 10am

No appointments required.

**Corbett Outpatient Centre:** Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm. No appointments required.

**Guest Outpatient Centre:** Monday to Friday, 8am to 1pm. No appointments required.

**Netherton Health Centre:** Appointment required, ring 01384 366500.

**Cross Street Health Centre:** Appointment required, ring 01384 366257.

**Ladies Walk Clinic:** Appointment required, ring 01902 575103.

**It is also very important to take good care of your teeth and gums, and visit the dentist for regular check-ups every six months whilst on the treatment. This is to monitor for a rare condition called osteonecrosis of the jaw. Please make sure your dentist knows that you are receiving Prolia treatment.**

## **How can I remind myself of my next Prolia injection?**

You should always check with the doctor or nurse giving you the injection when and where you will be receiving your next injection.

There is a reminder card with stickers contained in each pack of Prolia. It is a good idea to mark the next injection date on your personal calendar with the peel-off stickers. The reminder card can also be used to record your next injection date so if you want, you can ask the doctor/nurse if you can keep this card.

## **What if I forget to have my Prolia injection?**

If you miss your Prolia injection, you should arrange for it to be given as soon as possible.

The injections after this should be scheduled every six months from the last injection date.

## **Do I need to take additional supplements?**

It is best to take vitamin D supplements (with or without calcium) while you are receiving Prolia injections. Your consultant will discuss this with you in more detail. You should take these supplements exactly as directed.

## **How long will Prolia take to work?**

Research has shown an increase in bone density as early as three months after starting Prolia injections.

## **When can I stop my Prolia injections?**

As Prolia works to reduce bone loss in the long term, it is important that you keep receiving it for as long as it is prescribed for you.

If the medicine is causing you any problems, or you are considering stopping Prolia for any other reasons, you should discuss this with your consultant or GP first.

## **Will I have side effects from Prolia?**

Like all medicines, Prolia can cause side effects. However, not everyone will be affected by these. Some of the side effects may only be a mild inconvenience.

You must tell your consultant or GP if you experience any problems that you think may be related to Prolia, particularly if they are serious or persistent.

It is also important to let your consultant know if you notice side effects that are not listed in this leaflet.

### **Common side effects (affects one to 10 users in 100):**

- Chest infections
- Urinary tract infections – these can cause frequent and/or painful urination, and sometimes blood in the urine
- Sciatica (pain, tingling or numbness which spreads out down the leg)
- Cataract (clouding of the lens in your eye, affecting vision)
- Constipation
- Skin rash

### **Uncommon side effects (affects one to 10 users in 1,000):**

- Skin infections (skin may become red, hot, tender)
- Gastrointestinal problems (being sick, stomach pain)
- Ear infection
- Eczema (itching, redness and dryness of skin)

### **Rare side effects (affects one user in 10,000)**

- Low levels of calcium in the blood
- Painful sores of the mouth or jaw
- Osteonecrosis of the jaw which means the death of bone tissue. It can cause pain, swelling, or gum infections, loosening of teeth and poor healing of the gums especially after dental work
- Allergic reactions, such as swelling of the face or a skin rash (hives)
- Unusual thigh bone fractures

**If you experience pins and needles, muscle cramps or spasms, seizures or confusion, this could indicate low levels of calcium in your blood – please contact your GP immediately.**

**If you notice any teeth loosening, mouth pain or mouth sores that will not heal, please tell your dentist immediately.**

## Can I take my other medications?

You should let your consultant know the names of all the medicines you are taking as Prolia may interact with some medications. This includes medicines you may have bought over the counter without prescriptions.

The common medicines that may interact with Prolia include:

- Steroids
- Hormone replacement therapy (HRT) or other drugs that contain oestrogen
- Some anti-hormone medicines used in cancer treatment

You should inform your consultant if you are taking any of the medications listed above.

Sometimes your consultant may suggest that you take medicines that are known to interact with each other, particularly if the benefits of taking these medicines together would outweigh the risks. If this is the case, your consultant may want to monitor you more closely or change the dose of either medicine.

## Does Prolia affect pregnancy or breastfeeding?

Prolia is usually only prescribed for post-menopausal women. Its effects on fertility should therefore not be relevant.

Prolia is not recommended for use in those who are pregnant. You should let your consultant know if you are pregnant, if you think you may be pregnant or if you are planning a pregnancy.

It is uncertain whether or not Prolia passes into breast milk. If you are breastfeeding, or are planning to breastfeed whilst taking Prolia, you should discuss this with your consultant. Based on the benefits of Prolia to the mother and the advantages of breastfeeding to the baby, your consultant will help you decide whether to stop breastfeeding or whether to stop taking Prolia.

You should not stop taking Prolia during pregnancy or whilst breastfeeding without advice from your consultant.

For any men taking Prolia, please note that small amounts of Prolia may be in semen. If your sexual partner is pregnant, some Prolia from your semen may reach the unborn baby. While the risk is likely to be low, it is important to talk to your consultant if your partner becomes pregnant while you are taking Prolia.

## **Can I drink alcohol?**

Alcohol is safe within reason as it has no known interactions with Prolia. However, it is advised that you stay within the government guidelines for alcohol consumption (two to three units a day for women and three to four units a day for men).

## **Can I drive and operate machinery as normal?**

Prolia should not affect your ability to drive and operate machines. However, if you are not feeling well enough to drive or use machines due to side effects of Prolia, you should wait until you feel better, or discuss this with your consultant.

## **Can I have immunisation injections whilst receiving Prolia?**

There is no evidence that immunisations of any type should be avoided.

## **Other treatments**

Some people find that complementary therapy treatment is useful in osteoporosis and leaflets about this, provided by Arthritis Research Council, are available in our clinics.

Before taking combinations of prescribed and over-the-counter medications, you are advised to discuss this with your consultant.

## **Can I find out more?**

You can find out more from the following:

### **National Osteoporosis Society**

**Tel:** 0845 450 0230 (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)

**Website:** [www.nos.org.uk](http://www.nos.org.uk)

If you have any questions, or if there is anything you do not understand about this leaflet, please contact:

Rheumatology helpline on 01384 244789 (this is an answer machine so please do not use this helpline in an emergency) or speak to your pharmacist

Russells Hall Hospital switchboard number: 01384 456111

**This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from:**

<http://dudleygroup.nhs.uk/services-and-wards/rheumatology/>

If you have any feedback on this patient information leaflet, please email [patient.information@dgh.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@dgh.nhs.uk)

**This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 073 0510.**

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此宣传单可提供大字版本、音频版本和其它语言版本，请拨打电话：0800 073 0510。

Ulotka dostępna jest również w dużym druku, wersji audio lub w innym języku. W tym celu zadzwoń pod numer 0800 073 0510.

ਇਹ ਪਰਚਾ ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ, ਬੋਲ ਕੇ ਰੀਕਾਰਡ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਅਤੇ ਦੂਸਰੀਆਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ, 0800 073 0510 ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਜੀ।

Aceasta brosură poate fi pusă la dispoziție tipărită cu caractere mari, versiune audio sau în alte limbi, pentru acest lucru va rugăm sunați la 0800 073 0510.

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