
FDA-Approved Medications For Osteoporosis Treatment

Treatment of osteoporosis should always include: a well-balanced diet, getting the right amounts of calcium and vitamin D, being physically active every day, not smoking, quitting if you do smoke, limiting the amount of alcohol you drink, and taking safety precautions to prevent falls. However, if you are diagnosed with osteoporosis, these important lifestyle changes are often not enough; medication may be needed to stop further bone loss and to prevent broken bones. Your health care provider will review your medical history and assess your risk factors to determine your need for osteoporosis medication. It is important that you and your health care provider discuss the benefits and potential risks of any medication, taking into consideration your medical history.

Medicines to treat osteoporosis

The Federal Drug Administration (FDA) has approved the following medications for osteoporosis treatment. There are two different categories of medications: antiresorptive and anabolic.

Antiresorptive medication slows down the breakdown of bone. This helps to prevent bone loss and lower the risk of fracture.

Bisphosphonate antiresorptive medications:

- alendronate -generic medication (Brand name: Fosamax™, Fosamax™ Plus D)
- risedronate (Brand name: Actonel™, Actonel™ with Calcium)
- ibandronate (Brand name: Boniva™)
- zoledronic acid (Brand name: Reclast™)

Other antiresorptives:

- estrogen therapy or hormone therapy
- raloxifene (Brand name: Evista™)
- denosumab (Prolia™)

Anabolic medication helps to make new bone, increases bone density and can also reduce the risk for a broken bone. Currently, the only FDA-approved anabolic medication is:

- teriparatide (Forteo™)

How often and how will I take my medication?

The medication your health care provider recommends for you, will determine how it will be taken. Some medications come in pill form, injection, or intravenous. How often you take your medicine will also vary for each medication.

How can I get involved in deciding about taking a medication?

Education is the key to helping you make choices necessary to achieve healthy bones and wellness for a lifetime. It is always important to discuss all of the potential benefits and risks of any osteoporosis medication with your health care provider. Before and during treatment with any osteoporosis medication, it is important to tell your health care provider and pharmacist about all of the medications you take, including prescription medications, herbal supplements, and vitamins. Take an active role in your bone health and discuss medication options with your health care provider.