

# Pamidronate

Names	The generic drug name is pamidronate(pa-mi-DROE-nate). The brand name is Aredia®. There may be other names for this medication.
How is it Given?	This medicine is given by infusion into a vein (intravenous (IV) over 2-24 hours. The treatment schedule depends on your condition. There is no pill form of this medication.
What is it Used For?	This drug is used to treat cancer-related hypercalcemia (too much calcium in the blood), or to lessen complications of cancer spreading (metastasizing) to the bone such as fractures or pain).
How Does it Work?	<p>There are two kinds of bone cells – osteoblasts that create bone and osteoclasts that break down bone. Generally, the creation and destruction of bone is kept balanced, though we tend to lose bone mass as we age.</p> <p>Some cancers cause the osteoclasts to speed up their destruction of bone. In addition to bone weakness, which increases the risk of a fracture, this can cause pain and excess calcium to be released into the blood (hypercalcemia). High levels of calcium can affect your heart rate, among other bodily functions.</p> <p>Pamidronate is a bisphosphonate; these drugs slow down the osteoclasts and may help prevent these complications.</p>
What Should I Tell My Doctor Before I Begin	<p>Tell your doctor if you:</p> <p>our doctor if you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• are allergic to pamidronate or other bisphosphonates such as alendronate (Fosamax®), etidronate (Didronel®), risedronate (Actonel™)</li><li>• are taking chemotherapy medications; corticosteroids (dexamethasone /Decadron®, methylprednisolone/Medrol®, prednisone/Deltasone®); or thalidomide (Thalomid®)</li><li>• are being treated with radiation therapy</li><li>• have ever had thyroid surgery, seizures, or liver or kidney disease</li><li>• are pregnant or breastfeeding</li></ul>

**This drug may interact with other medications, increasing or decreasing their effectiveness or causing harmful side effects.**

### What are Some Possible Side Effects?

- Flu-like symptoms; mild fever, chills, fatigue and flushing (usually only happens after 1st treatment)
- Redness, swelling, or pain at the injection site
- Loss of appetite, change in your ability to taste food, heartburn, stomach pain, nausea, vomiting, and/or constipation
- Sores on the tongue or in the mouth
- Headache, dizziness, fatigue, sleep problems
- Coughing
- Difficulty urinating or painful urination
- Swelling in hands, arms, feet, legs

### How Can I Manage These Side Effects?

- Drink 2 - 3 quarts of fluid every 24 hours, unless your doctor tells you otherwise.
- To help prevent constipation and keep your bowels moving, add high fiber foods such as fruits, vegetables, and whole grains to your diet and, if possible, keep moving throughout the day. Your health care provider may prescribe a stool softener to help prevent constipation. If you do not move your bowels in 2-3 days, call the clinic.
- To help prevent nausea, avoid fried, spicy, and fatty foods. Eating small, frequent meals may help. If you have nausea, try foods and drinks that are 'easy on the stomach' - bland foods, ginger ale, dry crackers, and toast. Ask your doctor about medication to help prevent or lessen nausea or vomiting.
- Mouth care is very important. Rinse your mouth with a mixture of ½ tsp of baking soda in 8 oz of water after every meal and at bedtime. Brush your teeth and gums often with a soft toothbrush. (Soften it further by running it under warm water before brushing.) Avoid smoking, alcohol, and mouthwashes that contain alcohol.
- If you are dizzy or fatigued, avoid driving, using machines, or doing anything else that could be dangerous if you are not alert.
- If you get a rash or other skin irritation, talk to your doctor before using any over-the-counter products.

### When Should I Call the Doctor?

**Call 911 or go to the nearest hospital emergency department if you have life-threatening symptoms such as** signs of severe allergic reaction: Swelling or tingling in your face, tongue, mouth, or throat; chest tightness; wheezing; trouble breathing or swallowing; dizziness, shortness of breath; heart palpitations; or hives.

Please let us know if you go to the emergency room or are admitted to the hospital.

**Call your doctor immediately if you have:**

- any sign of infection: **Fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher**, chills, cough, sore throat, pain or burning upon urination; redness or tenderness along a vein, at an IV site, or at any other wound
- unusual bruising or bleeding: bleeding lasts more than 10-15 minutes or that causes dizziness; black or bloody stools; vomit that is bloody or that looks like coffee grounds; blood in your urine or phlegm, , spontaneous nose bleeds
- painful or swollen gums, loosening of teeth, numbness or heavy feeling in your jaw; numbness or tingling around the mouth
- unusual muscle twitching or spasms, confusion (hypercalcemia)
- severe pain
- eye pain, tearing, or changes in vision

**Call your doctor as soon as possible if you have:**

- nausea or diarrhea not relieved by prescribed medication or that prevents you from eating or drinking
- arms or leg pain or headache unrelieved by prescribed medication
- no bowel movement for 3 days, or if you are uncomfortable
- a decrease in how much/how often you urinate or burning/pain with urination
- extreme tiredness that interferes with normal activities
- dizziness, increased sweating, or mild fever
- swelling in your hands, ankles, or feet, or rapid weight gain

**What Else Should I Know?**

- Pamidronate may cause severe bone, muscle, or joint pain. You may begin to feel this pain in days, months, or years after your 1st injection.
- Pamidronate may cause serious problems with your jaw (osteonecrosis), especially if you have dental surgery or treatment. A dentist should examine your teeth and perform any needed treatments before you start pamidronate.
- Use a reliable and effective method of birth control to prevent pregnancy while you are receiving pamidronate. If you become pregnant while receiving pamidronate, call your doctor immediately.
- Your doctor will need to check your blood and/or urine at regular visits to monitor your electrolytes. Keep all your appointments.
- If you store this medicine at home, keep it at room temperature, away from heat, moisture, and direct light. After the powder medicine has been mixed with a liquid for injection, you may keep it in the refrigerator for up to 24 hours.
- If you would like more information about pamidronate, talk to your doctor or pharmacist.