

# Denosumab

**Names** The generic drug name is denosumab(den oh' sue mab). Xgeva® and Prolia® are brand names. There may be other names for this medication.

**How is it Administered?** Denosumab is given by injection under the skin (subcutaneous or SQ).

**Why am I Taking Denosumab?** This medication is used to reduce fractures caused by cancer that has spread to the bones. It is also used to treat osteoporosis, a condition in which the bones become weak and break easily.

**How Does it Work?** Denosumab is a RANK ligand (RANKL) inhibitor. It decreases the breakdown of bone tissue and increases bone strength and thickness (density).

**What Should I Tell My Doctor Before I Begin?** Tell your doctor if you:

- have had an allergic reaction to denosumab or any ingredients in the injection (Ask your pharmacist for a list of the ingredients.)
- have low level of calcium in your blood (hypocalcemia)
- have or have ever had anemia (a condition in which your red blood cells do not bring enough oxygen to the cells in your body); any infections; problems with your mouth, teeth, gums, or dentures; any condition that affects your blood's ability to clot normally or that has weakened your immune system; thyroid surgery; any stomach or intestinal conditions that make it difficult for your body to absorb nutrients from food; surgery to remove part of your small intestine; kidney disease; or thyroid disease
- are pregnant or breastfeeding

**This drug may interact with other medications or cause harmful side effects. Tell your doctor and pharmacist about all prescription or over-the-counter medications, vitamins, and supplements you take.**

**What Are Some Possible Side Effects?**

- Skin problems such as redness, dryness, itchiness, rash, oozing or crusty blisters, peeling skin
- Back pain or pain in your arms or legs
- Muscle pain

## How Can I Manage These Side Effects?

- Do not put anything on a rash or other skin condition unless it is approved by your doctor.
- Check with your doctor before taking any over-the-counter medications for muscle or other pains.

## When Should I Call the Doctor?

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

- any sign of an allergic reaction: itching or hives, swelling in your face or hands, swelling or tingling in your mouth or throat, chest tightness, trouble breathing, dizziness, or palpitations
- any sign of infection: fever of 100.5°F (38°C) or higher; chills; cough; sore throat; pain or burning upon urination; redness, swelling, or tenderness at the injection site; or ear drainage or severe pain
- muscle stiffness or spasms
- redness, tenderness, or swelling in the area of injection

### **Call your doctor as soon as possible if you experience:**

- ongoing pain that begins in your upper left or middle stomach but may spread to your back
- slow healing of the mouth or jaw
- nausea or vomiting not relieved by prescribed medication or that prevents you from eating or drinking; rapid weight loss of 5 pounds or more in 1 week
- extreme tiredness that interferes with normal activities

## What Else Should I Know About Denosumab?

- The injection is usually given once every 4 weeks. (For osteoporosis, it is usually given once every 6 months.)
- You may need to take calcium and vitamin D supplements during treatment.
- This medication may cause serious problems with your jaw, especially if you have had dental surgery or treatment during denosumab treatment. **See a dentist before you begin treatments.** Tell your dentist you are on this medication. Brush your teeth, floss, and clean your mouth properly while on this medication.
- Denosumab may cause certain bones to break and slow down the healing of bones that have already broken.
- Keep all appointments with your doctor and the lab.
- If you would like more information about denosumab, talk to your doctor or pharmacist.