

# Etidronate

This information from Lexicomp® explains what you need to know about this medication, including what it's used for, how to take it, its side effects, and when to call your healthcare provider.

## Brand Names: Canada

ACT Etidronate [DSC]; CO Etidronate [DSC]

## What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat Paget's disease.
- It is used to help control calcium levels in certain people.
- It may be given to your child for other reasons. Talk with the doctor.

## What do I need to tell the doctor **BEFORE** my child takes this drug?

- If your child is allergic to this drug; any part of this drug; or any other drugs, foods, or substances. Tell the doctor about the allergy and what signs your child had.
- If your child has any of these health problems: An esophagus that is not normal, low calcium levels, soft bones (osteomalacia), or trouble swallowing.
- If your child is not able to stand or sit up for 30 minutes.

This is not a list of all drugs or health problems that interact with this drug.

Tell the doctor and pharmacist about all of your child's drugs (prescription or OTC, natural products, vitamins) and health problems. You must check to

make sure that it is safe to give this drug with all of your child's other drugs and health problems. Do not start, stop, or change the dose of any drug your child takes without checking with the doctor.

## **What are some things I need to know or do while my child takes this drug?**

### **For all uses of this drug:**

- Tell all of your child's health care providers that your child is taking this drug. This includes your child's doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- Do not give this drug to your child for longer than you were told by the doctor.
- Have your child's blood work and bone density checked as you have been told by the doctor.
- This drug may affect certain lab tests. Tell all of your child's health care providers and lab workers that your child takes this drug.
- Have your child get a dental exam before starting this drug.
- Take care of your child's teeth. See a dentist often.
- Alcohol may interact with this drug. Be sure your child does not drink alcohol.
- If your child smokes, talk with the doctor.
- Severe esophagus problems like irritation, swelling, ulcers, and bleeding have happened with this drug. Talk with the doctor.
- Worsening of asthma has happened in people taking drugs like this one. Talk with the doctor.
- This drug may raise the chance of a broken leg. Talk with the doctor.

## **If your child is pregnant or breast-feeding a baby:**

- Talk with the doctor if your child is pregnant, becomes pregnant, or is breast-feeding a baby. You will need to talk about the benefits and risks to your child and the baby.

## **For Paget's disease:**

- Give calcium and vitamin D as you were told by your child's doctor.

## **What are some side effects that I need to call my child's doctor about right away?**

**WARNING/CAUTION:** Even though it may be rare, some people may have very bad and sometimes deadly side effects when taking a drug. Tell your child's doctor or get medical help right away if your child has any of the following signs or symptoms that may be related to a very bad side effect:

- Signs of an allergic reaction, like rash; hives; itching; red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin with or without fever; wheezing; tightness in the chest or throat; trouble breathing, swallowing, or talking; unusual hoarseness; or swelling of the mouth, face, lips, tongue, or throat.
- Black, tarry, or bloody stools.
- Chest pain.
- Throwing up blood or throw up that looks like coffee grounds.
- Severe stomach pain.
- Heartburn.
- Trouble swallowing.
- Very bad pain when swallowing.
- Very bad bone, joint, or muscle pain.
- Any new or strange groin, hip, or thigh pain.
- Change in eyesight.
- Fever, chills, or sore throat.

- Any unexplained bruising or bleeding.
- This drug may cause jawbone problems. The risk may be higher with longer use, cancer, dental problems, ill-fitting dentures, anemia, blood clotting problems, or infection. It may also be higher if your child has dental work, chemo, radiation, or takes other drugs that may cause jawbone problems. Many drugs can do this. Talk with your child's doctor if any of these apply to your child, or if you have questions. Call your child's doctor right away if your child has jaw swelling or pain.

## **What are some other side effects of this drug?**

All drugs may cause side effects. However, many people have no side effects or only have minor side effects. Call your child's doctor or get medical help if any of these side effects or any other side effects bother your child or do not go away:

- Upset stomach.
- Diarrhea.

These are not all of the side effects that may occur. If you have questions about side effects, call your child's doctor. Call your child's doctor for medical advice about side effects.

You may report side effects to your national health agency.

## **How is this drug best given?**

Give this drug as ordered by your child's doctor. Read all information given to you. Follow all instructions closely.

- Give on an empty stomach. Give at least 2 hours before or 2 hours after a meal.
- Have your child swallow whole. Do not let your child chew, break, or crush.
- Give this drug with a full glass of water.
- Give this drug with plain water only. Avoid giving with mineral water or

other drinks.

- Do not let your child eat or drink dairy products or give your child iron; vitamins with minerals; or products that have aluminum, calcium, or magnesium in them like some antacids within 2 hours before or 2 hours after this drug.
- Do not let your child lie down after taking this drug. This will help lower the chance of throat irritation. Ask the pharmacist how long before your child can lie down after taking this drug.
- Keep giving this drug to your child as you have been told by your child's doctor or other health care provider, even if your child feels well.

## **What do I do if my child misses a dose?**

- Give a missed dose as soon as you think about it.
- If it is close to the time for your child's next dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your child's normal time.
- Do not give 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.

## **How do I store and/or throw out this drug?**

- Store at room temperature in a dry place. Do not store in a bathroom.
- Keep all drugs in a safe place. Keep all drugs out of the reach of children and pets.
- Throw away unused or expired drugs. Do not flush down a toilet or pour down a drain unless you are told to do so. Check with your pharmacist if you have questions about the best way to throw out drugs. There may be drug take-back programs in your area.

## **General drug facts**

- If your child's symptoms or health problems do not get better or if they become worse, call your child's doctor.
- Do not share your child's drug with others and do not give anyone else's

drug to your child.

- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your child's doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.
- If you think there has been an overdose, call your poison control center or get medical care right away. Be ready to tell or show what was taken, how much, and when it happened.

## **Consumer Information Use and Disclaimer**

This generalized information is a limited summary of diagnosis, treatment, and/or medication information. It is not meant to be comprehensive and should be used as a tool to help the user understand and/or assess potential diagnostic and treatment options. It does NOT include all information about conditions, treatments, medications, side effects, or risks that may apply to a specific patient. It is not intended to be medical advice or a substitute for the medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment of a health care provider based on the health care provider's examination and assessment of a patient's specific and unique circumstances. Patients must speak with a health care provider for complete information about their health, medical questions, and treatment options, including any risks or benefits regarding use of medications. This information does not endorse any treatments or medications as safe, effective, or approved for treating a specific patient. UpToDate, Inc. and its affiliates disclaim any warranty or liability relating to this information or the use thereof. The use of this information is governed by the Terms of Use, available at

<https://www.wolterskluwer.com/en/know/clinical-effectiveness-terms>.

## **Last Reviewed Date**

2024-06-26

## **Copyright**

© 2025 UpToDate, Inc. and its affiliates and/or licensors. All rights reserved.

If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit [www.mskcc.org/pe](http://www.mskcc.org/pe) to search our virtual library.

Etidronate - Last updated on December 12, 2022

All rights owned and reserved by Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center



Memorial Sloan Kettering  
Cancer Center