

## Bisphosphonates and Calcium Supplements Indicated for Osteoporosis

### Aim

- To maximise the effectiveness of both bisphosphonates and calcium supplements by ensuring calcium supplements are not prescribed on the same day or at the same time of day as bisphosphonates, where appropriate.
- To ensure the correct quantities of calcium supplements are issued when prescribed six days a week.
- To improve quality, safety and reduce cost of prescribing.
- To ensure patient has all relevant safety information available at the point of dosing by adding 'Except on the day when you take your (name of bisphosphonate)' to dosing instructions

### Background/Summary

- Bisphosphonates and calcium supplements when co-prescribed are usually indicated for osteoporosis prophylaxis.
- National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) Clinical Knowledge Summaries (CKS): Osteoporosis prevention of fragility fractures recommends that calcium supplements are not prescribed on the same day as bisphosphonates <https://cks.nice.org.uk/osteoporosis-prevention-of-fragility-fractures>.
- Further information can be found in Prescribing Guidelines and Policies on the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough CCG website <https://www.cambridgeshireandpeterboroughccg.nhs.uk>.

### Guidance for Action

- *Establish how this project will be actioned with the GP:*
- *Ensure GP agreement is completed.*
- *Agree method of communication with patients if required (MOT/Practice to contact patient or GP to handle consultation).*
- Run a report to identify all patients' currently taking bisphosphonates + calcium supplements for osteoporosis (for SystemOne you will need to join two separate searches).
- Add dosing instructions to the report (for SystemOne use data output function).
- From your spreadsheet exclude patients taking strontium or pamidronate, as both of these agents are either not used for the management of osteoporosis or changes to treatment should be made under the direction of a secondary care specialist.
- From your spreadsheet exclude patients with correct instructions **and** quantity for example ONE tablet twice daily, (48 for 28 day prescription or 12 for 7 day prescription) ONE tablet once daily (24 for 28 day prescription or 6 for 7 day prescription), "except on the day when you take your (name of bisphosphonate)".
  - Patients with **correct dosing instruction** but the **wrong issue quantity** - amend issue quantity.
    - **Exception: Patients taking Calceos** - add instruction not to take on day of (name of bisphosphonate) but **do not** adjust the quantity or issue duration. These tablets come in tubes of 15 and are not suitable for packing down. To alter the issue duration would throw out the

28-day issue cycle which could pose problems for pharmacies/practices on electronic prescribing.

- **Exception: Patients taking daily bisphosphonate** e.g. risedronate 5mg tablets - ensure instruction says to take calcium at lunchtime and/or evening (not at the same time as bisphosphonate).
- **Exception: Other** e.g. notes/specialist letter states calcium supplements not required e.g. dietary intake confirmed as sufficient.
- All other patients – **add** 'Except on the day when you take your (name of bisphosphonate)' to instruction and **amend** quantity accordingly.

### Consider self-care:

Calcium and Vitamin D supplements can be purchased from a Community Pharmacist. However, if a prescriber has particular concerns that a patient might not be able to or is unwilling to self-care and treatment with a medication is required, then a prescription (FP10) should be considered.

If the patient is willing to self-care with calcium and vitamin D, please record the decision and brand of medication in the "Other medicines" section of the SystmOne record.

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### References

1. British National Formulary: Alendronic acid. Interactions and information for all bisphosphonates. Accessed via <https://bnf.nice.org.uk/drug/alendronic-acid.html>
2. NICE Clinical Knowledge Summary: Osteoporosis - prevention of fragility fractures. Last revised in 2016. Accessed via <https://cks.nice.org.uk/osteoporosis-prevention-of-fragility-fractures#!annualKnowUpd>
3. NICE (2017) Osteoporosis: assessing the risk of fragility fracture. National Institute for Health and Care Excellence. [www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk)
4. NICE (2017) Bisphosphonates for treating osteoporosis. National Institute for Health and Care Excellence. [www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk)