

Osteoporosis and the Medications You Take for It

Many people, mainly females, are taking medications for osteoporosis, a serious systemic condition that compromises bone strength. Numerous bisphosphonate medications are prescribed and taken orally for this condition. Among them are: Actonel, Boniva, Didronel, Fosamax, Fosamax Plus D, and Skelid.

If you are undergoing cancer therapy, you may be receiving an injected medication, including the brand names: Aredia, Bonefos, or Zometa.

The previously named medications have been related to a condition called osteonecrosis of the jaw (ONJ). The majority of patients who have developed ONJ have been those receiving the injected form of bisphosphonates.

Osteoporosis can cause major overall physical debilitation when bones become weak and break, causing hip and other fractures. The bisphosphonate medications have proven to be beneficial in treatment of osteoporosis. If you are considering significant oral treatment, you, your dentist, and the physician who is responsible for your bisphosphonate therapy should discuss the relative challenges and risks of not taking bisphosphonates compared to the risk of developing ONJ. Importantly, if you decide to take the bisphosphonate therapy, maintaining excellent oral health and oral hygiene is suggested for prevention of osteonecrosis.