Why am I being prescribed Adcal-D3® or Alendronic acid?

A fracture is a sign that your bones have weakened. In older age the density of bones reduces causing them to become weaker, this is known as osteoporosis or brittle bones. As the bones become weaker they are more susceptible to fracture (breaks), even whilst undertaking everyday tasks such as heavy lifting or minor falls. There is evidence that this is partly due to insufficient levels of calcium and vitamin D. Adcal-D3® contains calcium and vitamin D to boost these levels. Alendronic acid helps to build up bone and prevent bone loss caused by osteoporosis.

When and how should I take Adcal-D3®?

Adcal-D3® comes as either a chewable or dispersible tablet. The usual dose is 2 tablets daily, one at lunchtime and one at teatime. The chewable tablets should be chewed or sucked, the dispersible tablets should be dissolved in water before taking. It is not necessary to take Adcal-D3® around mealtimes.

If you take both Adcal-D3® and alendronic acid it is important to make sure you wait at least 4 hours after taking the alendronic acid before you take the Adcal-D3®.

When and how should I take alendronic acid?
The alendronic acid you have been prescribed is a weekly 70mg tablet. This will usually be started two weeks after your fall. It is important that the following instructions are followed to ensure you get the greatest benefit:

- The best time to take alendronic acid is first thing in the morning. It must be taken on an empty stomach which means you must not have anything to eat or drink (except for water) before taking the tablet.
- Take the tablet with a large glass of water (at least 200mLs) you should not eat or drink anything other than water for at least 30 minutes after taking the alendronic acid.
- After taking the tablet you must sit upright or stand for at least 30 minutes, it is very important not to lay down after taking alendronic acid.
- The day that the alendronic acid is taken should be the same every week, most people choose a day where their normal routine allows taking the alendronic acid, for example, a Saturday morning where they may get up and read the papers before breakfast.

What should I do if I forget to take my tablets?

If you forget to take your alendronic acid take it on the morning after you remember, however, do not take two tablets on the same day. Then continue taking weekly on your normal day. If you forget your Adcal-D3® take it when you remember, if you do not remember until the next dose is due do not double up the dose, just carry on as usual.

How long will they take to work?

They both take a long period of time to be effective, therefore it is important not to stop taking the tablets unless instructed to by your
They can only effectively treat osteoporosis if it is taken regularly long term.

How will I know that it is working?

You will not feel any benefits from taking these tablets. They work over a long period of time to strengthen the bones and prevent further fractures.

What are the possible side effects?

Side effects with Adcal-D3® are rare. Occasionally mild flatulence, nausea, gastric pain or diarrhoea may occur.

The most common side effects that you may experience whilst taking alendronic acid are; stomach pain, indigestion or acid reflux, flatulence or bloating, constipation or diarrhoea; and muscle, joint or bone pain.

If alendronic acid remains in contact with the mouth or throat for a prolonged period of time it can cause ulceration, this is why it is important to take with a full glass of water and stay upright for 30 minutes after taking the tablet. If you experience worsening of indigestion or pain behind the breastbone after taking alendronic acid stop taking the tablets and speak to your doctor.

In rare cases fractures caused by little or no injury can occur, however this is extremely rare in patients who have been taking alendronic acid for less than 5 years and this is why we recommend you stay on these tablets for 5 years and then stop. If you do experience groin, thigh or hip pain whilst taking alendronic acid please inform your doctor.

If it is necessary to undergo dental procedures whilst you are taking alendronic acid please discuss this with your doctor and dentist. You should also inform your doctor or dentist if you experience pain, swelling or numbness of the jaw or loosening of the teeth.

Can I take other medications with alendronic acid?

There are no medications that you must avoid whilst taking alendronic acid, however, it is important to ensure that you leave at least 30 minutes after taking alendronic acid before taking any other medications.

With Adcal-D3® there are some medications which required a certain amount of time to be left between them for example iron tablets, levothyroxine and some antibiotics.

Pharmacy Helpline

If you require information about your medicines you can call the Chesterfield Hospital Pharmacy Helpline between 9am-5pm Monday to Friday. Telephone 01246 512154.

This may include:

- How and when should I take my medicines?
- Can I take other medication with them?

We cannot answer questions about your illness in general or about other people’s medicines.