

## **Drugs Used for Osteoporosis linked to Osteonecrosis of the Jaw**

If you use, or have ever used, a bisphosphonate medication – for osteoporosis (a thinning of the bones) or as a cancer treatment therapy – let your dentist know.

Some of these medications (such as Fosamax) are taken orally to help in prevention and treatment of osteoporosis and other bone disorders. Others, such as Aredia, and Zometa are administered intravenously as part of cancer therapy associated with metastatic breast cancer, prostate cancer and multiple myeloma.

In rare instances, some individuals receiving intravenous bisphosphonates for cancer treatment have developed osteonecrosis (pronounced OSS-tee-oh-ne-KRO-sis) of the jaw, a rare but serious condition that involves severe loss, or destruction, of the jawbone.

Symptoms include, but are not limited to:

- pain, swelling, or infection of the gums or jaw
- gums that are not healing
- loose teeth
- numbness or a feeling of heaviness in the jaw
- drainage
- exposed bone

More rarely, osteonecrosis of the jawbone has occurred in patients taking oral bisphosphonates.

Most cases of osteonecrosis of the jaw associated with these medications have been diagnosed after invasive dental procedures such as tooth extraction; however the condition can also occur spontaneously. Patients currently receiving intravenous bisphosphonates should avoid invasive dental procedures when possible.