



Chemotherapy: Denosumab (Xgeva®)

Pronounced: "den-OH-sue-mab"

How drug is given: Subcutaneously (injection under the skin)

Purpose:

- To help prevent painful bone fractures
- To treat high calcium levels related to solid tumors
- To treat giant cell cancer

Things that may occur during treatment

- During treatment, you may experience back pain or backaches. Tell your cancer care team if this pain becomes bothersome or interferes with any of your daily activities.
- You may get a headache. Your cancer care team will suggest some medicine for you.
- Some patients may feel very weak or tired, also known as fatigue. You may need to rest or take naps more often. Mild to moderate exercise can also help you maintain your energy.
- Loose stools or diarrhea may occur within a few days after the drug is started. You may take loperamide (Imodium A-D®) to help control diarrhea. You can buy this at most drug stores. Be sure to also drink more fluids (water, juice, sports drinks). If these do not help within 24 hours, **call your cancer care team**.
- This medicine may cause a low calcium blood level. You may be asked to take calcium and vitamin D supplements.
- Some important minerals called electrolytes are found in your blood and body fluids. They can be affected by this medicine. Your cancer care team will check your blood work periodically to monitor phosphorus levels
- Mild to moderate nausea, vomiting, and loss of appetite may occur. You may be given medicine to help with this
- Your body may not be able to get rid of extra fluid. This is called edema. You may notice some swelling in your arms or legs.
- Mild constipation may occur after treatment begins. Be sure to drink more fluids and get more fiber in your diet by eating fresh fruits and vegetables. A daily stool softener, such as docusate (Colace®), and/or laxatives, such as senna (Senokot®), may be helpful. If these do not help within 48 hours, tell your cancer care team. Do not use bulk-forming laxatives such as Metamucil® without first talking with your cancer care team.
- If you develop a new or worsening cough or shortness of breath, tell your cancer care team.

- This medicine may reduce the number of healthy red blood cells in your body. This can lead to anemia. Symptoms can begin with tiredness and progress to severe dizziness and shortness of breath. Call your cancer care team right away if you have shortness of breath, a fast heartbeat, dizziness, or confusion.
- Before you have any dental procedures, tell your dentist you take denosumab. Report persistent pain in the jaw or slow healing in the mouth after dental surgery. Rarely, a breakdown of the jawbone, called osteonecrosis, may occur.

Sexual health and fertility concerns

If you are concerned about any of this, please talk with your cancer care team. It is not safe to take this medicine during pregnancy. It could harm an unborn baby.

Women:

- To keep from getting pregnant, use an effective form of birth control and keep using it for at least 5 months after you stop treatment.
- Barrier methods of birth control prevent the sperm from reaching the egg. Discuss with your cancer team which type of barrier method is best for you. Some barrier methods are cervical caps, female/male condoms, and diaphragms with spermicides. Some are available over-the-counter; others must be prescribed.

The information in this document includes some, but not necessarily all, of the possible side effects of this medication. The side effects listed here may not be the same ones you experience. Your side effects may be different, depending on how often you receive treatment (your schedule) and how much you receive each time (your dosage). Side effects may also vary if you are taking other medications. Please speak with your cancer care team if you have questions about possible side effects you may experience. This document should not take the place of conversations with members of your cancer care team.

If you experience any significant change in your health during or after treatment, contact a member of your cancer care team right away.