

# BONES IN FOCUS:

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW TO KEEP YOUR BONES STRONG

### What are bone metastases and how can they affect my bone health?

*Bone metastases* are cancerous cells that have spread from a tumor in another organ to the bone.<sup>1</sup>

Bone metastases can weaken the bone and cause serious bone problems, including<sup>2</sup>



- Broken bones (fractures)



- The need for radiation treatments to the bone



- The need for surgery to prevent or repair broken bones



- Pressure on the spinal cord (spinal cord compression)

Exercising while living with bone metastases can affect your risk of a serious bone problem. It requires planning and care. Be mindful of how you feel, and talk with your healthcare team before beginning or changing an exercise routine.<sup>3</sup>

**Serious bone problems should not be taken lightly. It is important to prevent them before they happen<sup>1,4</sup>**

### What can I do to prevent serious bone problems?

Your doctor may prescribe one of the following *bone-targeting medicines* to help keep your bones strong.<sup>1</sup>



- Biologics work by blocking a signal to the cells that break down bone<sup>1</sup>
  - Given as an injection under the skin once every 4 weeks<sup>5</sup>



- Bisphosphonates work by interfering with the cells that break down bone<sup>1</sup>
  - Given as an intravenous (IV) infusion every 3 to 4 weeks

**Continuing treatment with a bone-targeting medicine is important because it treats a different problem than your primary cancer treatment. Talk to your doctor about your best path forward<sup>6-8</sup>**

## What are the most common side effects of bone-targeting medicines?

- Some patients experience tiredness/weakness, low phosphate levels in the blood, nausea, and feeling breathless or winded<sup>5</sup>
- Talk to your healthcare team about potential side effects

## Are there serious risks I should be aware of?

- Lower than normal levels of calcium (hypocalcemia) may occur because less bone breakdown may result in less calcium being released into the bloodstream, which can be life-threatening<sup>1</sup>
  - Symptoms of hypocalcemia include muscle stiffness, twitching, spasms, or cramps<sup>5</sup>
  - Take calcium and vitamin D as directed by your doctor<sup>5</sup>
- A serious jaw bone problem, called osteonecrosis of the jaw, has occurred in some patients using bone-targeting medicines<sup>1</sup>
  - Signs and symptoms include soft tissue swelling and redness, loose teeth, gum or jaw infections, and slow healing after dental work<sup>5,9</sup>
  - Keep your mouth healthy while on treatment and talk to your doctor about any upcoming dental work<sup>1,10</sup>
- Tell your doctor if you experience any of these symptoms

# TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE IN PREVENTING SERIOUS BONE PROBLEMS

- ✓ Talk to your healthcare team about your risk for serious bone problems
- ✓ Ask about the potential benefits and risks of using a bone-targeting medicine
- ✓ For your best chance at success with a bone-targeting medicine, adhere to the treatment schedule you and your doctor set

**References:** **1.** American Cancer Society. Bone metastasis. American Cancer Society Web site. <https://www.cancer.org/treatment/understanding-your-diagnosis/bone-metastasis/what-is-bone-mets.html>. Revised May 2, 2016. Accessed February 13, 2017. **2.** Brodowicz T, O'Byrne K, Manegold C. Bone matters in lung cancer. *Ann Oncol.* 2012;23(9):2215-2222. **3.** American Cancer Society. Physical activity and the cancer patient. American Cancer Society Web site. <https://www.cancer.org/treatment/survivorship-during-and-after-treatment/staying-active/physical-activity-and-the-cancer-patient.html>. Revised March 24, 2014. Accessed February 13, 2017. **4.** Gralow JR, Biermann JS, Farooki A, et al. NCCN Task Force report: bone health in cancer care. *J Natl Compr Canc Netw.* 2013;11(suppl 3):s1-s50. **5.** Product B Prescribing Information, Company U. **6.** Talreja DB. Importance of antiresorptive therapies for patients with bone metastases from solid tumors. *Cancer Manag Res.* 2012;4:287-297. **7.** Coleman R, Body JJ, Aapro M, Hadji P, Herrstedt J; on behalf of the ESMO Guidelines Working Group. Bone health in cancer patients: ESMO Clinical Practice Guidelines. *Ann Oncol.* 2014;25(suppl 3):iii124-iii137. **8.** Van Poznak CH, Temin S, Yee GC, et al. American Society of Clinical Oncology executive summary of the clinical practice guideline update on the role of bone-modifying agents in metastatic breast cancer. *J Clin Oncol.* 2011;29(9):1221-1227. **9.** Campisi G, Fedele S, Fusco V, et al. Epidemiology, clinical manifestations, risk reduction and treatment strategies of jaw osteonecrosis in cancer patients exposed to antiresorptive agents. *Future Oncol.* 2014;10(2):257-275. **10.** American Dental Association. Osteoporosis and oral health. American Dental Association Web site. [www.mouthhealthy.org/en/az-topics/o/osteoporosis-and-oral-health](http://www.mouthhealthy.org/en/az-topics/o/osteoporosis-and-oral-health). Accessed February 13, 2017.

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