


# Should you take alendronate for osteoporosis?


A Cochrane Decision Aid for patients and doctors to [discuss options](#)

## 1. Why are you being offered alendronate for osteoporosis?

- Osteoporosis (also called [low bone density](#)) weakens your bones and causes the loss of minerals like calcium. It is more common in women after menopause. You are more likely to break a hip, wrist or spine after a bump or fall. You may already be managing osteoporosis with regular walking or exercise, Vitamin D and calcium supplements.
- Alendronate is an option if you are a woman who has been through menopause, broken a bone recently, and told you have osteoporosis. It may prevent another bone break. There are other options including other drugs.




## 2. What are your options?

 **Take alendronate:** You take a pill by mouth and must sit upright or stand for 30 minutes before eating in the morning to avoid esophagus irritation. Depending on the dose, it is taken once a day or once a week.

 **Not take alendronate.** You may wish to discuss other treatment options with your doctor.

## 3. What do you think of the benefits and risks of each option?

- Shown below are the [best estimates](#) of what happens to 100 women with osteoporosis who take or do not take alendronate over 1 to 4 years. [Link to a more detailed table.](#)
- Review the table, add other reasons you may have to choose/avoid options and rate each benefit and risk using stars to show how much each one matters to you.
- Other information to consider: allergies, cost, safe with other drugs, length of treatment, ways to manage side effects and changes in side effects over time.

	Take alendronate 	Not take alendronate 	How much does this matter to you? 0★ (not at all) 5★ (a great deal) 
<b>Benefits or Reasons to Choose alendronate</b>			
5 fewer women break a hip <sup>[+++]</sup>	4 out of 100	9 out of 100	★★★★★
It slows down the loss of minerals in the bones	Yes	No	★★★★★
Add other reasons to choose alendronate:			★★★★★
<b>Risks or Reasons to Avoid alendronate</b>			
The same number of women stop treatment with both options due to side effects (such as stomach problems or ulcers in the esophagus) <sup>[++]</sup>		9 out of 100	★★★★★
1 more woman has serious harms ( <a href="#">jaw damage</a> ) if 10,000 women take alendronate for about 2 years <sup>[+]</sup>	1 out of 10,000	0 out of 10,000	★★★★★
Inconvenience of taking alendronate (sitting upright or standing for 30 minutes before eating in the morning)	Yes	No	★★★★★
Add other reasons to avoid alendronate:			★★★★★

4. Which option do you prefer?  Take alendronate  Not take alendronate  Unsure

## 5. What are your decision making needs?

- Do you feel sure about the best choice for you?  Yes  No
- Do you know the benefits and risks of each option?  Yes  No
- Are you clear about which benefits and risks matter most to you?  Yes  No
- Do you have enough support and advice to make a choice?  Yes  No

[The SURE Test](#)

