



# Information for Dental/Oral Surgery Treatment in Patients who have received Bisphosphonate Drugs

**Bisphosphonate drugs** (Fosamax, Zometa, Aredia, Didronel, or Actonel) are commonly used to treat or prevent osteoporosis and for some types of cancer that has spread to the bone. You have advised us that you have been or are being treated with one of the bisphosphonate drugs. It is important for you to know that there is a potential risk of significant complications associated with dental treatment after taking these drugs. Bisphosphonate drugs appear to adversely affect the healing process of bone following minor trauma, thereby reducing or eliminating its ordinary excellent healing capacity. This risk is increased after surgery, especially from extractions, implant placement or other “invasive” procedures that might cause even mild trauma to or exposure of the jaw bone. You have some risk of developing this disorder called **Bisphosphonate-Associated Osteonecrosis of the Jaw**. This is a smoldering, long-term, destructive process in the jawbone that is often very difficult or impossible to eliminate.

The following issues are summarized to give you the most current information known about oral surgery treatment in the presence or history of bisphosphonate drug use:

1. Despite all precautions, after oral surgery of any type there may be delayed healing, osteonecrosis, loss of bone and soft tissues, pathologic fracture of the jaw, drainage of infection from the jaw to the skin, or other significant complications.
2. If osteonecrosis should occur, treatment may be prolonged and difficult, involving ongoing intensive therapy including hospitalization, long-term antibiotics, and debridement to remove dead bone. Reconstructive surgery may be required, including bone grafting, metal plates and screws, and/or skin flaps and grafts.
3. Even if there are no immediate complications from the proposed dental treatment, the jaws are always subject to spontaneous breakdown and infection due to the precarious condition of the healing ability of the bone. Even minimal trauma from a toothbrush, chewing hard food, or denture sores may trigger a complication.
4. Long-term post-surgical monitoring may be required and cooperation in keeping scheduled appointments is important. Regular and frequent dental check-ups with your dentist are important to monitor and attempt to prevent breakdown in your oral health.

This information is not meant to alarm you, just given to you to make you aware that the medication you are taking or have taken in the past might significantly alter your ability to heal after surgery. If you have questions regarding your treatment, please discuss them with Dr. Nordstrom.