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2. Actonel

Actonel

Generic name: [risedronate](#) [*ris-ED-roe-nate*]

Brand names: Actonel, [Atelvia](#)

Drug class: [Bisphosphonates](#)

Medically reviewed by [Sanjai Sinha, MD](#). Last updated on Apr 22, 2024.

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What is Actonel?

Actonel is a [bisphosphonate medicine](#) that alters bone formation and breakdown in the body. This can slow bone loss and may help prevent bone fractures.

Actonel is used to treat or prevent osteoporosis caused by menopause, steroid use, or gonadal failure.

Actonel is also used to increase bone mass in men who have osteoporosis, and to treat Paget's disease of bone in men and women.

Warnings

You should not take Actonel if you have problems with your esophagus, or low levels of calcium in your blood.

Do not take Actonel if you cannot sit upright or stand for at least 30 minutes after taking the medicine.

Risedronate can cause serious problems in the stomach or esophagus. **Stop using Actonel and call your doctor at once if you have chest pain, new or worsening heartburn, or pain when swallowing.**

Also call your doctor if you have muscle spasms, numbness or tingling (in hands and feet or around the mouth), new or unusual hip pain, or severe pain in your joints, bones, or muscles.

Actonel side effects

Get emergency medical help if you have **signs of an allergic reaction to Actonel** (hives, difficult breathing, swelling in your face or throat) **or a severe skin reaction** (fever, sore throat, burning in your eyes, skin pain, red or purple skin rash that spreads and causes blistering and peeling).

Stop using Actonel and call your doctor at once if you have:

- chest pain, new or worsening heartburn;

- difficulty or pain when swallowing;
- pain or burning under the ribs or in the back;
- severe heartburn, burning pain in your upper stomach, or coughing up blood;
- new or unusual pain in your thigh or hip;
- jaw pain, numbness, or swelling;
- severe joint, bone, or muscle pain; or
- **low calcium levels** - muscle spasms or contractions, numbness or tingly feeling (around your mouth, or in your fingers and toes).

Common Actonel side effects may include:

- heartburn, diarrhea, indigestion;
- stomach pain;
- back pain, joint pain, muscle pain; or
- flu-like symptoms.

This is not a complete list of side effects and others may occur. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

 [Actonel side effects](#) (more detail)

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Before taking this medicine

You should not take Actonel if you are allergic to risedronate, or if you have:

- low levels of calcium in your blood (hypocalcemia); or
- problems with the muscles in your esophagus (the tube that connects your mouth and stomach).

Do not take Actonel if you cannot sit upright or stand for at least 30 minutes. Risedronate can cause serious problems in the stomach or esophagus. You must stay upright for at least 30 minutes after taking this medicine.

To make sure Actonel is safe for you, tell your doctor if you have ever had:

- trouble swallowing;
- problems with your stomach or digestion;
- hypocalcemia;
- a dental problem (you may need a dental exam before you begin taking risedronate);
- kidney disease; or
- any condition that makes it hard for your body to absorb nutrients from food (malabsorption).

Risedronate may cause jaw bone problems (osteonecrosis). The risk is highest in people with cancer, blood cell disorders, pre-existing dental problems, or people treated with steroids, chemotherapy, or radiation. Ask your doctor about your own risk.

Talk with your doctor about the risks and benefits of using Actonel.

It is not known whether risedronate will harm an unborn baby. Stop taking Actonel and tell your doctor right away if you become pregnant, or think you may be pregnant.

You should not breastfeed while using Actonel.

Actonel should not be given to a child younger than 18 years old.

 [Actonel pregnancy and breastfeeding warnings](#) (more detail)

How should I take Actonel?

Actonel tablets come in different strengths (number of milligrams per pill) that are taken on different schedules. You may need to take a tablet once per day, once per week, once per month, or for 2 days in a row once per month.

Your dosing schedule will depend on why you are taking Actonel and in what tablet strength. **If you change strengths, you may also need to change your schedule.**

Follow all directions on your prescription label and read all medication guides or instruction sheets. Your doctor may occasionally change your dose. Use Actonel exactly as directed. Risedronate is often given for only 3 to 5 years.

Take the Actonel tablet first thing in the morning with a full glass (6 to 8 ounces) of water, at least 30 minutes before you eat or drink anything or take any other medicine.

Use only plain water when taking a Actonel tablet. Do not use coffee, tea, soda, juice, or mineral water.

Do not crush, chew, or suck on a tablet. Swallow the tablet whole.

After swallowing Actonel tablet, wait at least 30 minutes:

- Before you lie down or recline. You may sit, stand or walk, and do normal activities like reading.
- Before you take your first food or drink except for plain water.
- Before you take other medicines including vitamins, calcium, iron, antacids, or laxatives.

Take this medicine at the same time each day or on the same day each week or each month (depending on your dosing schedule).

Pay special attention to your dental hygiene while taking risedronate. Brush and floss your teeth regularly. If you need to have any dental work (especially surgery), tell the dentist ahead of time that you are using risedronate.

Actonel is only part of a complete program of treatment that may also include diet changes, exercise, bone mineral density testing, and taking calcium and vitamin supplements. Follow your doctor's instructions very closely.

Store at room temperature away from moisture and heat. Keep unused effervescent tablets in the foil blister pack.

 [Detailed Actonel dosage information](#)

What happens if I miss a dose?

Once-daily dosing: If you forget to take Actonel first thing in the morning, do not take it later in the day. Wait until the following morning and skip the missed dose. Do not take two (2) doses in one day.

Once-per-week or once-per-month dosing: If you forget to take Actonel on your scheduled day, take it first thing in the morning on the day after you remember the missed dose. Then return to your regular weekly or monthly schedule on your chosen dose day. Do not take 2 doses in one day.

Call your doctor for instructions if you miss more than 2 doses in a month.

What happens if I overdose?

Drink a full glass of milk and seek emergency medical attention or call the Poison Help line at 1-800-222-1222. **Do not make yourself vomit and do not lie down.**

What to avoid

Do not take two different brands or strengths of risedronate at the same time.

Avoid taking any other medicines for at least 30 minutes after taking Actonel. This includes vitamins, calcium, iron, antacids, or laxatives. Some medicines can make it harder for your body to absorb risedronate.

Avoid smoking, or try to quit. Smoking can reduce your bone mineral density, making fractures more likely.

Avoid drinking large amounts of alcohol. Heavy drinking can also cause bone loss.

What other drugs will affect Actonel?

Tell your doctor about all your current medicines and any you start or stop using, especially:

- aspirin;
- calcium or iron supplements;
- antacids, laxatives; or
- **NSAIDs (nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs)** - ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin), naproxen (Aleve), celecoxib, diclofenac, indomethacin, meloxicam, and others.

This list is not complete. Other drugs may interact with risedronate, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal products. Not all possible interactions are listed in this medication guide. Talk with your doctor about the best dosing schedule for your other medicines.

 [Actonel drug interactions](#) (more detail)

Does Actonel interact with my other drugs?

Enter medications to view a detailed interaction report using our [Drug Interaction Checker](#).

Actonel

+

Enter a drug name

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- [What medications are available to treat osteoporosis?](#)

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Patient resources

Other brands

[Atelvia](#)

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Other brands

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Related treatment guides

- [Prevention of Osteoporosis](#)
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Further information

Remember, keep this and all other medicines out of the reach of children, never share your medicines with others, and use Actonel only for the indication prescribed.

Always consult your healthcare provider to ensure the information displayed on this page applies to your personal circumstances.

[Medical Disclaimer](#)

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DRUG STATUS

Availability		
Rx	Prescription only	
Pregnancy & Lactation		
	Risk data available	
CSA Schedule*		
N/A	Not a controlled drug	▼
Approval History		
10+ years	FDA approved 1998	▼

User Reviews & Ratings

3.0 / 10

[31 Reviews](#)

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[Actonel 35 mg \(RSN 35 mg\)](#)



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