



half-life of only about 2 hours, but has a high affinity for bone. Binding to serum plasma proteins is low. Clodronate is not metabolised. Over 70% of an intravenous dose is excreted unchanged in the urine within 24 hours, the remainder being sequestered to bone tissue.

#### References.

1. Conrad KA, Lee SM. Clodronate kinetics and dynamics. *Clin Pharmacol Ther* 1981; **30**: 114–20.
2. Yakatan GI, et al. Clodronate kinetics and bioavailability. *Clin Pharmacol Ther* 1982; **31**: 402–10.
3. Ylitalo P, et al. Comparison of pharmacokinetics of clodronate after single and repeated doses. *Int J Clin Pharmacol Ther* 1999; **37**: 294–300.

**Bioavailability.** Enhanced bioavailability tablets of clodronate disodium are available in some countries, the licensed dose of which is less than the dose of the standard formulations (see below). However, an open, randomised, crossover study in 88 subjects found that a 1040-mg dose of the enhanced tablet formulation provided only 52% of the bioavailable dose of 1600 mg of the standard capsule formulation.<sup>1</sup>

1. Lapham G, et al. Bioavailability of two clodronate formulations. *Br J Hosp Med* 1996; **56**: 231–3.

## Uses and Administration

Clodronate is a bisphosphonate with general properties similar to those of the other bisphosphonates (p.1091). It inhibits bone resorption, but appears to have less effect on bone mineralisation than etidronate at comparable doses. Clodronate is used, generally as the disodium salt, as an adjunct in the treatment of severe hypercalcaemia associated with malignancy. In addition, it is used in the management of osteolytic lesions and bone pain associated with skeletal metastases. Doses are expressed in terms of anhydrous clodronate disodium; 125 mg of clodronate disodium tetrahydrate is equivalent to about 100 mg of anhydrous substance.

Clodronate is given by slow intravenous infusion, diluted in sodium chloride 0.9% or glucose 5%, or orally, as a single daily dose or in 2 divided doses; food should be avoided for at least 1 hour before or 1 hour after an oral dose. Clodronate disodium is available in capsules of 400 mg and standard tablets of 800 mg. Tablets of clodronate disodium 520 mg are also available in some countries, and have a greater bioavailability than the capsules or standard tablets; one such tablet of clodronate disodium 520 mg is equivalent to about two capsules each containing clodronate disodium 400 mg or one 800-mg standard tablet (but see Bioavailability, above).

In the management of osteolytic lesions, hypercalcaemia, and bone pain associated with **skeletal metastases** in patients with breast cancer or multiple myeloma, clodronate disodium 1.6 g daily (4 capsules or 2 standard tablets) is given orally, and may be increased if necessary to a maximum of 3.2 g daily. Alternatively a dose of 1.04 g (2 tablets) daily, increased if necessary up to 2.08 g daily, may be given as enhanced bioavailability tablets.

**In hypercalcaemia of malignancy** clodronate disodium is given by intravenous infusion over not less than 2 hours in a dose of 300 mg in 500 mL of infusion solution daily on successive days until normocalcaemia is achieved (usually within 5 days); duration of treatment should not exceed 10 days. Alternatively, it may be given as a single intravenous infusion of 1.5 g in 500 mL of infusion solution over a period of 4 hours. Once serum-calcium concentrations have been reduced to an acceptable level, maintenance therapy may be given orally in similar doses to those used for initial oral treatment of metastases. If hypercalcaemia recurs, the intravenous dose may be repeated.

#### General references.

1. Plosker GL, Goa KL. Clodronate: a review of its pharmacological properties and therapeutic efficacy in resorptive bone disease. *Drugs* 1994; **47**: 945–82.
2. Kanis JA, McCloskey EV. Clodronate. *Cancer* 1997; **80** (suppl): 1691–5.
3. Brandi ML. Impiego del clodronato nei disordini del metabolismo minerale: stato dell'arte nell'anno 2000. *Minerva Med* 2001; **92**: 251–68.
4. Dando TM, Wiseman LR. Clodronate: a review of its use in the prevention of bone metastases and the management of skeletal complications associated with bone metastases in patients with breast cancer. *Drugs Aging* 2004; **21**: 949–62.

**Administration.** In Italy, clodronate is also used *intramuscularly*.<sup>1,2</sup> The usual dose for maintenance therapy of hypercalcaemia is 100 mg daily for 2 to 3 weeks; in the prevention and treatment of postmenopausal osteoporosis, 100 mg is given every 7 to 14 days. However, injection into the gluteal muscle caused local hardening; severe pain at the injection site may limit prolonged use of this route.<sup>1</sup> In Canada, clodronate has been given *subcutaneously* in doses of 1500 mg in 50 to 250 mL of infusion solution over 2 to 3 hours, to treat hypercalcaemia associated with malignancy. The chest and abdomen were the sites most frequently used; pain was the most common adverse effect.<sup>3</sup>

1. Rossini M, et al. Intramuscular clodronate therapy in postmenopausal osteoporosis. *Bone* 1999; **24**: 125–9.
2. Filippini P, et al. Intermittent versus continuous clodronate administration in postmenopausal women with low bone mass. *Bone* 2000; **26**: 269–74.
3. Roemer-Bécuwe C, et al. Safety of subcutaneous clodronate and efficacy in hypercalcaemia of malignancy: a novel route of administration. *J Pain Symptom Manage* 2003; **26**: 843–8.

**Administration in renal impairment.** A pharmacokinetic study<sup>1</sup> found that renal clearance of intravenous clodronate was highly dependent on renal function. While recommending caution in interpreting these results for patients with malignancy or severe bone disease, the authors recommended the following dose adjustments based on creatinine clearance (CC):

- CC 50 to 80 mL/minute: up to 25% reduction in dose
- CC 12 to 49 mL/minute: 25 to 50% dose reduction
- CC less than 12 mL/minute: 50% dose reduction

However, some manufacturers recommend that *intravenous* infusion of clodronate should be avoided in patients with moderate to severe renal impairment (serum creatinine greater than 440 micromoles/litre). Others recommend, where multiple infusions are given, adjustment according to creatinine clearance (CC) as follows:

- mild renal impairment (CC 50 to 80 mL/minute): 25% reduction in dose
- moderate renal impairment (CC 10 to 50 mL/minute): 25 to 50% dose reduction
- severe impairment (CC below 10 mL/minute): contra-indicated

For the *oral* route the following adjustments may be made:

- CC between 10 and 30 mL/minute: 50% dose reduction
- CC below 10 mL/minute (or serum creatinine greater than 440 micromoles/litre): contra-indicated

1. Saha H, et al. Pharmacokinetics of clodronate in renal failure. *J Bone Miner Res* 1994; **9**: 1953–8.

**Complex regional pain syndrome.** Osteoporosis is one of the features of complex regional pain syndrome (p.6). Bisphosphonates may be of benefit in controlling associated pain in some patients. In a small study,<sup>1</sup> intravenous clodronate 300 mg daily for 10 days significantly improved pain, tenderness, swelling, and motion compared with placebo.

1. Varenna M, et al. Intravenous clodronate in the treatment of reflex sympathetic dystrophy syndrome: a randomized, double blind, placebo controlled study. *J Rheumatol* 2000; **27**: 1477–83.

**Hypercalcaemia.** Bisphosphonates are the preferred drugs for treating hypercalcaemia of malignancy (p.1083) once the patient has been adequately rehydrated. Clodronate has been shown to be effective<sup>1–4</sup> in the treatment of malignant hypercalcaemia. A small dose-response study<sup>3</sup> found low-dose clodronate for mild cases to be as effective as high-dose clodronate for moderate to severe cases of tumour-induced hypercalcaemia.

1. O'Rourke NP, et al. Effective treatment of malignant hypercalcaemia with a single intravenous infusion of clodronate. *Br J Cancer* 1993; **67**: 560–3.
2. Elomaa I, Blomqvist C. Clodronate and other bisphosphonates as supportive therapy in osteolysis due to malignancy. *Acta Oncol* 1995; **34**: 629–36.
3. Shah S, et al. Is there a dose response relationship for clodronate in the treatment of tumour induced hypercalcaemia? *Br J Cancer* 2002; **86**: 1235–7.
4. Roemer-Bécuwe C, et al. Safety of subcutaneous clodronate and efficacy in hypercalcaemia of malignancy: a novel route of administration. *J Pain Symptom Manage* 2003; **26**: 843–8.

**Malignant neoplasms of the bone.** Bisphosphonates are of benefit in some patients with metastatic bone disease (p.660) not only to manage bone pain and hypercalcaemia, but to reduce skeletal complications such as fractures. Clodronate is licensed for such use in many countries. Studies in breast cancer patients with bone metastases found that clodronate reduced the incidence of fractures,<sup>1,2</sup> and delayed the time to onset of new bone events.<sup>2,3</sup> Whether bisphosphonates can prevent the development of new skeletal metastases is unclear. Results of studies using clodronate to reduce skeletal metastases in women with breast cancer have been conflicting.<sup>1,4–6</sup> and one study in women with node-positive disease actually suggested an increase in concomitant visceral metastases.<sup>5</sup> Overall, the studies appeared limited by duration, and further data are needed.<sup>7</sup> In a trial of patients with multiple myeloma,<sup>8</sup> oral clodronate was found to slow the progression of skeletal disease, especially in those patients with less overt disease at diagnosis; the authors suggested starting clodronate early in the course of the disease.

1. Kanis JA, et al. Clodronate decreases the frequency of skeletal metastases in women with breast cancer. *Bone* 1996; **19**: 663–7.

2. Kristensen B, et al. Oral clodronate in breast cancer patients with bone metastases: a randomized study. *J Intern Med* 1999; **246**: 67–74.
3. Tubiana-Hulin M, et al. Essai comparatif randomisé en double aveugle clodronate oral 1600 mg/j versus placebo chez des patientes avec métastases osseuses de cancer du sein: double-blind controlled study comparing clodronate versus placebo in patients with breast cancer bone metastases. *Bull Cancer* 2001; **88**: 701–7.
4. Diel IJ, et al. Reduction in new metastases in breast cancer with adjuvant clodronate treatment. *N Engl J Med* 1998; **339**: 357–63.
5. Saarto T, et al. Adjuvant clodronate treatment does not reduce the frequency of skeletal metastases in node-positive breast cancer patients: 5-year results of a randomized controlled trial. *J Clin Oncol* 2001; **19**: 10–17.
6. Powles T, et al. Randomized, placebo-controlled trial of clodronate in patients with primary operable breast cancer. *J Clin Oncol* 2002; **20**: 3219–24.
7. Hurst M, Noble S. Clodronate: a review of its use in breast cancer. *Drugs Aging* 1999; **15**: 143–67.
8. McCloskey EV, et al. A randomized trial of the effect of clodronate on skeletal morbidity in multiple myeloma. *Br J Haematol* 1998; **100**: 317–25.

**Osteogenesis imperfecta.** Clodronate has been reported to be of benefit in a boy with osteogenesis imperfecta (p.1083) type I. Starting at 13½ years old he was given oral clodronate 400 mg daily for 5 years, and sustained no new low-trauma fractures during this time. Treatment was stopped for 8 months, but bone mineral density remained below normal limits. Clodronate was restarted at 800 mg daily and given with no untoward effects, until the patient was 22 years old, 8 years after initial referral.<sup>1</sup>

1. Ashford RU, et al. Oral clodronate as treatment of osteogenesis imperfecta. *Arch Dis Child* 2003; **88**: 945.

**Osteoporosis.** Bisphosphonates are used for the prevention and treatment of osteoporosis (p.1084). Clodronate is licensed for this use in some countries. Studies of its use in daily oral doses, or intermittent intravenous infusions,<sup>1</sup> or intramuscular injections (at 7-, 10- or 14-day intervals)<sup>1,2</sup> found increases in bone mineral density at various sites in postmenopausal women with osteoporosis or low bone mass. A large study<sup>3</sup> in postmenopausal women with vertebral osteopenia found that oral clodronate 800 mg daily prevented bone loss in the lumbar spine and femoral trochanter, but not the femoral neck; this dose has been shown to reduce vertebral fracture risk in women with postmenopausal or secondary osteoporosis.<sup>4</sup> The risk of vertebral fractures was also reduced in patients with arthritis receiving corticosteroids, who were given intramuscular clodronate once weekly.<sup>5</sup> Oral clodronate may be of benefit in reducing bone loss after heart transplantation,<sup>6</sup> but the benefits of intravenous clodronate in a small prospective study in patients receiving parenteral nutrition (who are at high risk of osteoporosis) were uncertain.<sup>7</sup>

1. Filippini P, et al. Intermittent versus continuous clodronate administration in postmenopausal women with low bone mass. *Bone* 2000; **26**: 269–74.
2. Rossini M, et al. Intramuscular clodronate therapy in postmenopausal osteoporosis. *Bone* 1999; **24**: 125–9.
3. Välimäki MJ, et al. Prevention of bone loss by clodronate in early postmenopausal women with vertebral osteopenia: a dose-finding study. *Osteoporosis Int* 2002; **13**: 937–47.
4. McCloskey E, et al. Clodronate reduces vertebral fracture risk in women with postmenopausal or secondary osteoporosis: results of a double-blind, placebo-controlled 3-year study. *J Bone Miner Res* 2004; **19**: 728–36.
5. Frediani B, et al. Effects of 4-year treatment with once-weekly clodronate on prevention of corticosteroid-induced bone loss and fractures in patients with arthritis: evaluation with dual-energy X-ray absorptiometry and quantitative ultrasound. *Bone* 2003; **33**: 575–81.
6. Ippoliti G, et al. Clodronate treatment of established bone loss in cardiac recipients: a randomized study. *Transplantation* 2003; **75**: 330–4.
7. Haderslev KV, et al. Effect of cyclical intravenous clodronate therapy on bone mineral density and markers of bone turnover in patients receiving home parenteral nutrition. *Am J Clin Nutr* 2002; **76**: 842–8.

**Paget's disease of bone.** Bisphosphonates may be indicated for patients with Paget's disease of bone (p.1086) if bone pain is persistent, or to prevent further progression of the disease. A review<sup>1</sup> of clodronate stated that oral doses of 800 to 1600 mg daily were effective in reducing bone turnover in patients with Paget's disease, and that remission after stopping was longer with the higher dose. Duration of therapy also appears to affect response;<sup>1</sup> longer treatment was associated with a longer time to relapse.<sup>2</sup> Short-term intravenous clodronate (300 mg daily for 5 to 10 days) has also been found to reduce biochemical markers of bone turnover, and sustain remission for up to 1 year.<sup>1,3</sup>

1. Plosker GL, Goa KL. Clodronate: a review of its pharmacological properties and therapeutic efficacy in resorptive bone disease. *Drugs* 1994; **47**: 945–82.
2. Khan SA, et al. Duration of response with oral clodronate in Paget's disease of bone. *Bone* 1996; **18**: 185–90.
3. Brogini M, et al. Short courses of intravenous clodronate in the treatment of Paget's disease of bone: a long-term follow-up trial. *Int J Clin Pharmacol Res* 1993; **13**: 301–4.

## Preparations

**Proprietary Preparations** (details are given in Part 3)

**Austral.:** Bonofos; **Austria:** Ascredar; **Benelux:** Lodronat; **Belg.:** Bonofos; **Ostac.:** Braz.; **Bonofos:** Ostac; **Canada:** Bonofos; **Ostac:** Chile; **Lodronat;** **Cz.:** Bonofos; **Lodronat;** **Denn.:** Bonofos; **Fin.:** Bonofos; **Fr.:** Clastoban; **Lyto:** Ger.; **Bonofos:** Clodron; **Clodron beta;** Ostac; **Gr.:** Bonofos; **Ostac;** **Hong Kong:** Bonofos; **Ostac;** **Hung.:** Bonofos; **Lodronat;** **Indon.:** Bonofos; **Irl.:** Bonofos; **Loron:** **Israel:** Bonofos; **Ostac:** **Ital.:** Claston; **Climadod;** **Clodeoster;** Clodron; **Clody:** Difosonal; **Dolkint;** Motlidol; **Niklod;** Ossiten;



Osteonorm; Osteostab; **Malaysia:** Bonefos; **Mex.:** Bonefos; **Neth.:** Bonefos; **Ostac:** **Norw.:** Bonefos; **Philipp.:** Bonefos; **Pol.:** Bonefos; **Sindronat:** **Port.:** Bonefos; **Ostac:** **Rus.:** Bonefos (Бонефос); **S.Afr.:** Bonephos; **Ostac:** **Singapore:** Bonefos; **Spain:** Bonefos; **Hemocalcin:** Mebonat; **Swed.:** Bonefos; **Ostac:** **Switz.:** Bonefos; **Ostac:** Bonefos; **Turk.:** Bonefos; **UK:** Bonefos; Clasteon; Loron.

## Denosumab (USAN, rINN)

AMG-162; Dénosumab; Denosumabum.

Деносу́мab

CAS — 615258-40-7.

### Profile

Denosumab is a human monoclonal antibody that specifically targets the receptor activator of nuclear factor-kappa B ligand (RANKL), a mediator of the resorptive phase of bone remodeling. Denosumab is under investigation for various conditions, including osteoporosis, treatment-induced bone loss, rheumatoid arthritis, bone metastases, and multiple myeloma.

### References

- Lewiecki EM. RANK ligand inhibition with denosumab for the management of osteoporosis. *Expert Opin Biol Ther* 2006; **6**: 1041–50.
- Body J-J, et al. A study of the biological receptor activator of nuclear factor-kappaB ligand inhibitor, denosumab, in patients with multiple myeloma or bone metastases from breast cancer. *Clin Cancer Res* 2006; **12**: 1221–8.
- McClung MR, et al. Denosumab in postmenopausal women with low bone mineral density. *N Engl J Med* 2006; **354**: 821–31.
- Hamdy NA. Targeting the RANK/RANKL/OPG signaling pathway: a novel approach in the management of osteoporosis. *Curr Opin Investig Drugs* 2007; **8**: 299–303.
- Lewiecki EM, et al. AMG 162 Bone Loss Study Group. Two-year treatment with denosumab (AMG 162) in a randomized phase 2 study of postmenopausal women with low BMD. *J Bone Miner Res* 2007; **22**: 1832–41.
- Lipton A, et al. Randomized active-controlled phase II study of denosumab efficacy and safety in patients with breast cancer-related bone metastases. *J Clin Oncol* 2007; **25**: 4431–7.
- Bone HG, et al. Effects of denosumab on bone mineral density and bone turnover in postmenopausal women. *J Clin Endocrinol Metab* 2008; **93**: 2149–57.
- Cohen SB, et al. Denosumab Rheumatoid Arthritis Study Group. Denosumab treatment effects on structural damage, bone mineral density, and bone turnover in rheumatoid arthritis: a twelve-month, multicenter, randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled, phase II clinical trial. *Arthritis Rheum* 2008; **58**: 1299–1309.
- Miller PD, et al. Effect of denosumab on bone density and turnover in postmenopausal women with low bone mass after long-term continued, discontinued, and restarting of therapy: a randomized blinded phase 2 clinical trial. *Bone* 2008; **43**: 222–9.

## Etidronate

ATC — M05BA01.

ATC Vet — QM05BA01.

### Etidronic Acid (BAN, USAN, rINN)

Acide Étidronique; Ácido etidróico; Acidum Etidronicum; Etidronihappo; Etidronsyra. 1-Hydroxyethylidenedi(phosphonic acid).

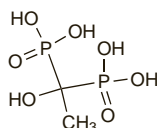
Этидроновая Кислота

C<sub>2</sub>H<sub>8</sub>O<sub>7</sub>P<sub>2</sub> = 206.0.

CAS — 2809-21-4.

ATC — M05BA01.

ATC Vet — QM05BA01.



### Etidronate Disodium (USAN, rINN)

Dinatriti etidronas; Dinatriumetidronaatti; Dinatriumetidronat; Dinatrium-etidronát; Disodium Etidronate (BANM); Disodu etidronian; Disodium Etidronat; EHDP; Etidronas Dinatricum; Etidronate disodique; Etidronate Disodique; Etidronato disódico. Disodium dihydrogen (1-hydroxyethylidene)diphosphonate.

Динатрий Этидронат

C<sub>2</sub>H<sub>6</sub>Na<sub>2</sub>O<sub>7</sub>P<sub>2</sub> = 250.0.

CAS — 7414-83-7.

ATC — M05BA01.

ATC Vet — QM05BA01.

NOTE. Other etidronic acid sodium salts are designated as etidronate monosodium, etidronate trisodium, and etidronate tetrasodium. The name etidronate sodium is used only in *Martindale* where the salt cannot be identified more precisely.

The symbol † denotes a preparation no longer actively marketed

Pharmacopoeias. In *Eur.* (see p.vii), *Jpn.* and *US*.

**Ph. Eur. 6.2** (Etidronate Disodium). A white or yellowish, hygroscopic powder. Freely soluble in water; practically insoluble in alcohol and in acetone. A 1% solution in water has a pH of 4.2 to 5.2. Store in airtight containers.

**USP 31** (Etidronate Disodium). A white powder that may contain lumps. Freely soluble in water; practically insoluble in alcohol. Store in airtight containers. pH of a 1% solution in water is between 4.2 and 5.2.

### Adverse Effects, Treatment, and Precautions

As for the bisphosphonates in general, p.1089. Unlike the newer bisphosphonates etidronate produces marked impairment of bone mineralisation at high therapeutic doses. An increase in bone pain may occur in patients with Paget's disease. Impairment of bone mineralisation may result in osteomalacia, and fractures have been reported. If a fracture occurs etidronate should be stopped until healing is complete. Hyperphosphataemia may occur, usually at high doses, but generally resolves 2 to 4 weeks after the end of therapy. There have been reports of paraesthesias, peripheral neuropathy, and confusion. Burning of the tongue, alopecia, erythema multiforme, and exacerbation of asthma have occurred rarely. Transient loss or alteration of taste has been reported mainly during and after intravenous infusion.

**Effects on the blood.** For a report of pancytopenia caused by etidronate therapy, see Effects on the Skin, below.

**Effects on the ears.** Ototoxicity, manifest as tinnitus and hearing loss, has been reported<sup>1</sup> in 2 patients given etidronate for osteoporosis; both patients had pre-existing otosclerosis and the authors recommended that those with ear pathology be monitored audiometrically when given bisphosphonates.

- Yezli S, et al. Further hearing loss during osteoporosis treatment with etidronate. *Postgrad Med J* 1998; **74**: 363–4.

**Effects on the eyes.** For reports of ocular effects associated with the bisphosphonates, including etidronate, see under Bisphosphonates, p.1090.

**Effects on the gastrointestinal tract.** Oral etidronate was not associated with an increased incidence of upper gastrointestinal problems in a retrospective cohort study.<sup>1</sup> There was also no evidence of an increased incidence of gastrointestinal effects when given with NSAIDs or corticosteroids. Similarly, another large cohort study found no increased risk of peptic ulcer disease associated with the use of cyclical etidronate.<sup>2</sup> However, oesophageal ulceration has been reported with daily etidronate;<sup>3,4</sup> in one case possibly associated with incorrect use,<sup>3</sup> and in another, complicated by prior use of diclofenac, and a history of gastro-oesophageal reflux disease.<sup>4</sup>

- van Staa T, et al. Upper gastrointestinal adverse events and cyclical etidronate. *Am J Med* 1997; **103**: 462–7.
- Burger H, et al. Cyclical etidronate use is not associated with symptoms of peptic ulcer disease. *Eur J Clin Pharmacol* 2000; **56**: 319–22.
- Macedo G, et al. Ulcerative esophagitis caused by etidronate. *Gastrointest Endosc* 2001; **53**: 250–1.
- Maroy B. Ulcère géant de l'œsophage probablement dû à la prise d'etidronate. *Gastroenterol Clin Biol* 2001; **25**: 917–18.

**Effects on the kidneys.** Bisphosphonates are excreted by the kidneys, thus caution is advised in patients with renal impairment. When given by intravenous infusion for the treatment of hypercalcaemia of malignancy they have been reported to affect renal function adversely; hypercalcaemia or malignancy may also have contributed. For reports of renal failure associated with etidronate see under Bisphosphonates, p.1091.

**Effects on mental state.** Sensory hallucinations and confusion were reported in an elderly woman given daily etidronate for a week. Symptoms resolved on stopping the drug and recurred on rechallenge.<sup>1</sup> Mood disturbances, lack of concentration, and memory impairment were also reported in 3 patients receiving longer-term cyclical treatment; symptoms again diminished on stopping etidronate and reappeared after rechallenge.<sup>2</sup>

- Burnet SP, Petrie JP. 'Wake up and smell the roses'—a drug reaction to etidronate. *Aust N Z J Med* 1999; **29**: 93.
- Wolffenbuttel BHR, van der Klauw MM. Psychische bijwerkingen van behandelings met bisfosfonaten. *Ned Tijdschr Geneesk* 2003; **147**: 35–7.

**Effects on the respiratory system.** For a report of bronchospasm induced by etidronate in an aspirin-sensitive asthmatic, see p.1091. For a report of fatal cardiorespiratory failure secondary to acute respiratory distress syndrome caused by etidronate, see Effects on the Skin, below.

**Effects on the skin.** A 47-year-old woman with a history of auto-immune rheumatic disease developed toxic epidermal necrolysis, pancytopenia, and acute respiratory distress syndrome 7 days after starting etidronate for osteoporosis; she died

of cardiorespiratory failure, secondary to the acute respiratory distress syndrome, despite aggressive supportive measures.<sup>1</sup>

- Coakley G, Isenberg DA. Toxic epidermal necrolysis, pancytopenia and adult respiratory syndrome. *Br J Rheumatol* 1995; **34**: 798.

**Hypersensitivity.** Allergic reactions to bisphosphonates do occur but appear to be rare (see p.1091).

### Interactions

As for the bisphosphonates in general, p.1091.

**Anti-inflammatory drugs.** For a lack of apparent interaction between cyclical etidronate and corticosteroids or NSAIDs see under Effects on the Gastrointestinal Tract, above.

### Pharmacokinetics

After oral doses of etidronate, absorption is variable and appears to be dose dependent. At usual doses about 1 to 6% of a dose is absorbed. Absorption is reduced by food, especially by products containing calcium or other polyvalent cations. Etidronate is rapidly cleared from the blood and has been reported to have a plasma half-life of 1 to 6 hours. It is not metabolised. About 50% is excreted in the urine within 24 hours, the remainder being sequestered to bone and slowly eliminated. The half-life of etidronate in bone exceeds 90 days. Unabsorbed etidronate appears in the faeces.

### Uses and Administration

Etidronate is a bisphosphonate with general properties similar to those of the other bisphosphonates (p.1091). It inhibits the growth and dissolution of hydroxyapatite crystals in bone and may also directly impair osteoclast activity. It diminishes bone resorption and thus reduces bone turnover.

Etidronate is used as an adjunct in the treatment of severe hypercalcaemia, especially when associated with malignancy. It is also given in bone disorders in which excessive bone resorption is a problem, such as Paget's disease of bone and osteoporosis. In addition, it may be used for the prevention and treatment of ectopic (heterotopic) ossification. A chelate of etidronate with radio-active technetium-99m (p.2055) is used diagnostically as a bone scanning agent and a similar compound with rhenium-186 for the palliation of bone metastases in prostate cancer (see below).

Etidronate is given as the disodium salt, by intravenous infusion over at least 2 hours, or orally, usually as a single daily dose. Food should be avoided for 2 hours before and after oral doses.

In the treatment of **Paget's disease**, etidronate disodium is given orally in a usual initial dose of 5 mg/kg daily for not more than 6 months. Doses above 10 mg/kg daily should be reserved for severe disease and should not be given for more than 3 months at a time. The maximum dose is 20 mg/kg daily. The response to etidronate may be slow in onset and may continue for several months after stopping therapy. Therefore, further treatment should only be given after a drug-free interval of at least 3 months and after evidence of relapse; it should not be given for longer than the initial treatment.

In the treatment of **hypercalcaemia of malignancy** the recommended dose of etidronate disodium by slow intravenous infusion is 7.5 mg/kg daily for 3 successive days, although infusions may be continued for up to 7 days if necessary. This daily dose should be diluted in at least 250 mL of sodium chloride 0.9% and infused over at least 2 hours. There should be at least a 7-day interval between courses of treatment. Once serum-calcium concentrations have been reduced to an acceptable level, maintenance therapy with oral etidronate disodium 20 mg/kg daily for 30 days may be started on the day after the last intravenous dose; treatment may be extended to a maximum of 90 days.

For the prevention and treatment of **ectopic ossification** complicating hip replacement etidronate disodium has been given orally in a dose of 20 mg/kg daily for 1 month before and 3 months after the operation. For ectopic ossification due to spinal cord injury it has been