

Medications related osteonecrosis of jaw (MRONJ)

Other formats

If you need this information in another format such as audio tape or computer disk, Braille, large print, high contrast, British Sign Language or translated into another language, please telephone the PALS desk on 01271 314090.

Why have I been given this leaflet?

As part of your current medical treatment, you are taking a medication which might affect your jaw bone. There is a small risk for developing a condition called medication-related osteonecrosis of the jaw (MRONJ). This may result in some bone becoming exposed in your jaw and the area fails to heal. This may cause pain and discomfort and is a rare side effect of certain medications. This can happen after having a tooth extracted or rarely even if you have not had any surgery in your mouth.

Medications associated with MRONJ are: Bisphosphonates such as Alendronic acid, Risendronate sodium, Zoledronic acid, Ibandronic acid, Pamidronate disodium and Sodium clodronate, Denosumab, Bevacizumab, Sunitinib and Aflibercept.

What is the risk of developing MRONJ?

The risk is very low as this is an uncommon side-effect of the drug treatment. However, some other medical problems that you may have might increase the risk slightly e.g. for conditions which are managed by long-term oral steroids.

Should I stop taking the drug?

No, continue to take your medication. The medical benefits will far outweigh the risks. Talk with your doctor and dentist if you have any questions

What are the risks associated with dental treatment?

The risk is very low to non-existent for most ordinary dental treatments. The risk is increased if you require treatment that affects bone (like a tooth extraction) but it is still considered low. For patients taking above medications for treatment of osteoporosis or other non-malignant diseases of bone, the risk of developing MRONJ is between 1 in 1,000 to 1 in 10,000. For those patients who take the above medications for management of cancer, the risk of MRONJ is around 1 in 100.

What are the risks associated with not having dental treatment?

You may be at increased risk of developing other health problems if a dental disease is not treated. Your dentist will be able to discuss alternative treatment options and the risks associated with them. You should also consult with your doctor about any health risks.

Can I decrease my risk of developing MRONJ?

There are several things you can do to reduce the risk of this side effect:

- Visit your dentist for regular dental check-ups. It is important to seek dental care as soon as your doctor or specialist discusses prescribing above medications for you.
- Ensure that you tell your dentist about all medications you are taking and your medical history
- Talk to your dentist about good oral healthcare routine and prevention of gum disease and dental decay

Are there signs and symptoms I should look out for?

You should contact your dentist immediately if you notice any of the following symptoms:

- Feeling of tingling, numbness, heaviness or other unusual sensations in your jaw
- Pain in your jaw or a bad taste
- Swelling of your jaw
- Pus or discharge
- Loose teeth
- Exposed bone in your jaw

If I develop MRONJ how will it be treated?

If your dentist suspects that you have this side effect, you will be referred to Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery department at the hospital. A specialist will assess you and provide any necessary treatment. This may include use of antibiotics or antimicrobial mouth rinses. In cases where more bone is exposed, some surgery may be required. However, the treatment will depend on your individual symptoms.

Other resources

You may find additional helpful information on the following websites:

National Osteoporosis society www.nos.org.uk

Paget's Association www.paget.org.uk

PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) ensures that the NHS listens to patients, relatives, carers and friends, answers questions and resolves concerns as quickly as possible. If you have a query or concern call 01271 314090 or e-mail ndht.pals@nhs.net. You can also visit the PALS and Information Centre in person at North Devon District Hospital, Barnstaple.

Have your say

Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust aims to provide high quality services. However, please tell us when something could be improved. If you have a comment or compliment about a service or treatment, please raise your comments with a member of staff or the PALS team in the first instance.

'Care Opinion' comments forms are on all wards or online at www.careopinion.org.uk.

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