

Dr Samy
BSc BDS MFDRCS DipDSed MSc MClintDent MRDRCS LLM FDSRCS
Oral Surgeon, Periodontist, Sedationist

BONE ANTI-RESORPTIVE DRUGS AND ORAL SURGERY

PATIENT INFORMATION

What are bone anti-resorptive drugs?

Denosumab and other drugs called bisphosphonates are used to alter bone metabolism in patients with osteoporosis, multiple myeloma, or some bone cancers.

What are the risks of having an oral surgery procedure if taking anti-resorptive medication?

There is a possibility that small areas of bone may lose vitality and splinter off through your gum and there is also a possibility the bone may not heal properly. When an area of your jawbone is affected in this way it is called **Medication Related Osteonecrosis of the Jaw (MRONJ)**.

How likely am I to have bone healing problems caused by anti-resorptive medication?

Not likely as it's rather rare. Patients taking the anti-resorptive medication by injection or infusion are more likely to have healing problems than those who take it in tablet form. If you take steroids as well then the risk is increased further. Smoking increases the risk further still.

What happens if I need a tooth out and I take anti-resorptive medication?

The procedure will be performed very carefully to minimise surgical trauma to the bone. Afterwards, we recommend that you avoid further trauma to the area and refrain from wearing your denture if you have one. You **must not** stop taking the medication unless your doctor specifically advises you to do so.

How is MRONJ managed?

In the rare event that MRONJ occurs, there will likely be an area of exposed, dead bone which is not healing within the timeframe normally expected. If this is not associated with any pain or infection, then the area need only be kept clean with a mouthwash called Chlorhexidine. If there are signs of infection such as severe pain, swelling, pus, or a bad taste, then antibiotics will be required. Rarely, minor surgery is required to remove a piece of superficial non-healing bone.

How can MRONJ be prevented?

Ideally, at the point when your doctor decides that you need anti-resorptive medication, your dentist should carry out a full dental assessment before you start treatment so that any oral surgery takes place before your bone metabolism is altered. If you require an oral surgery procedure having already commenced the anti-resorptive medication then all is not lost as special measures will be taken, but this is best avoided if logistically possible. Dental procedures that do not involve bone, such as fillings for example, can go ahead without any particular concern.

How can I avoid problems going forwards?

Make sure you have a good dental health regime with a view to maintaining your teeth and avoiding the need for any dental extractions. This should include investing in regular dental check-ups and getting advice about your diet, how to use fluoride toothpaste and how to perform effective oral hygiene measures. You should visit your dentist and hygienist regularly to prevent any dental problems before they arise.