

Abaloparatide (Tymlos)

What Is It?

Abaloparatide (Tymlos) is a liquid medicine containing a parathyroid hormone protein. While continuously high parathyroid hormone levels cause bone loss, tiny daily doses of parathyroid hormone increase bone formation and density. In clinical trials, abaloparatide reduced the chance of breaking a bone in women post menopause with low bone density. In 2017, the FDA approved abaloparatide for the treatment of osteoporosis in postmenopausal women and in men.

How to Take It

There are some things you can do to get the most benefit from taking abaloparatide. Be sure to eat enough calcium-rich foods and/or take a calcium supplement. Total calcium intake from food and supplements should be at least 1,200 mg a day. Also take vitamin D as recommended by your provider. Avoid drinking too much alcohol or smoking tobacco. Work on strength and balance to reduce your risk of falling and breaking a bone.

Side Effects

The most common side effect (58%) is redness where the medicine is injected. Up to 20% of people can get high blood or urine calcium levels from taking the drug. If you get high calcium levels, your provider might ask you to consume less calcium or vitamin D. Some people get high uric acid levels, but most do not get gout. Within four hours of injecting the medicine, some people have low blood pressure or feel dizzy. If this happens, your provider might ask you to inject the medicine when sitting or lying down. In rats, this medication causes bone cancer (osteosarcoma). A related medication (teriparatide or Forteo) has been used since 2002, with no evidence that it increases bone cancer in humans. To be cautious, the FDA has limited use of abaloparatide to two years in a person's life. Use of abaloparatide is not recommended for people at high risk of bone cancer.

Tell Your Rheumatology Provider

Please contact your provider if you get pregnant while taking abaloparatide, which should not be used during pregnancy. Excess thirst can indicate high calcium levels. If you have sudden redness, warmth, swelling and/or pain in a joint, you might have gout. Abaloparatide is an expensive medication and if your insurance won't cover its cost, there are other ways to get this medication.

Updated March 2023 by Kanika Monga, MD, and reviewed by the American College of Rheumatology Committee on Communications and Marketing.

This information is provided for general education only. Individuals should consult a qualified health care provider for professional medical advice, diagnosis and treatment of a medical or health condition.