

# DENOSUMAB

## What are Biologics?

- Biologics are a new class of DMARD (Disease Modifying Anti-Rheumatic Drug) which have been available for over 10 years now.
- Biologics are most commonly used in the treatment of inflammatory arthritis including rheumatoid arthritis, psoriatic arthritis & ankylosing spondylitis. However, they have also been used to try to treat a variety of other autoimmune rheumatic conditions.

## What is denosumab?

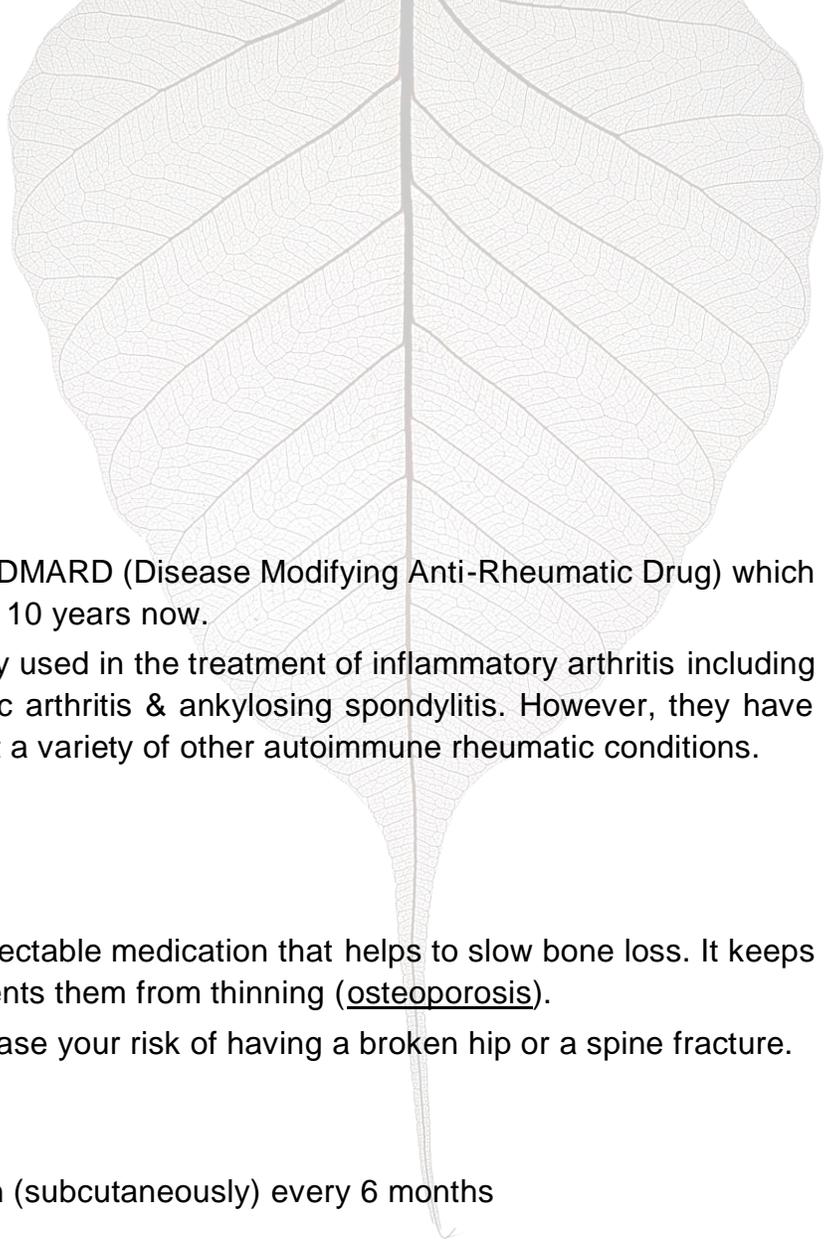
- Denosumab (Prolia) is an injectable medication that helps to slow bone loss. It keeps your bones strong and prevents them from thinning (osteoporosis).
- Using it long-term can decrease your risk of having a broken hip or a spine fracture.

## What is the typical dose?

- 60mg injected under the skin (subcutaneously) every 6 months

## How does denosumab work?

- In osteoporosis, your body removes more bone than it replaces – eventually bones become thin and brittle and are more likely to fracture. Some medications, such as corticosteroids (e.g. prednisone), can increase this bone removal. Denosumab slows down the cells in your body responsible for removing bone, slowing or even reversing this process.
- Your doctor may send you for a bone mineral density (BMD) test, an exam that measures the thickness of your bones. This is one of the tests used to determine if you need denosumab and if it is working for you.



## What are the possible side effects of denosumab?

### Side Effect

### Ways to Reduce Side Effects

#### Common Side Effects

- Pain in muscles or joints
- Rash
- More common around the time of injection, but can last longer in some cases
- Talk to your doctor or pharmacist if it is interfering with your ability to do regular activities

#### Less Common Side Effects

- Low calcium levels (numbness, tingling, muscle spasms)
- Increased risk of infection
- Your doctor may order blood tests to check the amount of calcium in your blood
- Tell your doctor if you notice signs of any infection, such as fever or feeling unwell, or signs of a skin infection (cellulitis) such as redness and heat

#### Rare Side Effects

- Wounds in your jaw from limited blood supply
- Unusual break in your thigh bone
- Tell your dentist that you are using denosumab prior to having dental work done
- Tell your doctor if you have persistent pain in your mouth or jaw
- Tell your doctor if you have new or unusual pain your hip or thigh

## What do I do if I miss a dose?

- If you forget a denosumab injection, book an appointment to have it injected as soon as you remember. Your next dose after that should be 6 months later.

**Are there medications I should avoid when using denosumab?**

- If you are using another biologic or immune-suppressing medication, be sure to discuss this with your physician or pharmacist before starting denosumab.

**How long will I have to be on denosumab?**

- Each patient is different and this is something you should discuss with your doctor or pharmacist. The length of therapy depends on your risk of fracture over the next 10 years. Talk to your doctor or pharmacist before deciding to stop your medication.