

This advice has been prepared with advice from local rheumatology specialist and in line with national guidance due to enquiries about how to manage patients who are 'shielding' and require ongoing treatment with zoledronic acid or denosumab for osteoporosis.

Newly diagnosed patients with osteoporosis not yet initiated on zoledronic acid or denosumab to be assessed and a decision made on delaying treatment on a case by case basis.

Key messages patients receiving zoledronic acid:

Patients already initiated on zoledronic acid infusions. All 2nd and 3rd infusions to be deferred for up to 6 months¹ (this includes anyone who has already commenced their current course of treatment and has had an infusion within the past 18 months). See [NICE NG167](#) April 2020

Key messages patients already established on Denosumab

Treatment with denosumab should not be postponed¹. Unlike bisphosphonates, denosumab is known to have a rapid offset of action once a single 6-monthly injection is missed. This leads to a rebound increase in bone turnover, which in some patients has led to new vertebral fractures occurring soon after discontinuation².

For patients who are reluctant to attend for their injections, and there is a need to consider the safest approach for those patients at high risk should they contract Covid-19.

For patients receiving denosumab injections in primary care, wherever possible injections should continue to be given on time. If a patient meets the criteria for shielding (see published NHS England criteria), the possibility of administering the injection in the patient's home e.g. by a district nurse should be explored. For lower risk patients, injections can be given at the surgery in the usual way providing social distancing / PPE guidelines are followed.

BSW formulary position Denosumab (Prolia) (amber with share care)

Denosumab for the treatment of osteoporosis is on the BSW Joint Formulary (bswformulary.nhs.uk) with an 'amber with shared care' traffic light status. [Shared Care](#) which includes monitoring guidance can be found on the BSW net formulary website. Most patients are already being treated as part of shared care agreements across BSW and receiving injections within Primary Care.

Patients established on Denosumab attending RUH

For patients attending the RUH for their injections (usually patients with renal impairment), lower risk patients (as per NHS England criteria) should continue to attend as usual. Where patients meet the criteria for shielding, the possibility of administering the next injection in the patient's home e.g. by a district nurse should be explored. If this is not possible, the clinician should have a discussion with the patient regarding the risks and benefits of continuing vs. delaying treatment.

Working together:

NHS Bath and North East Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group

NHS Swindon Clinical Commissioning Group

NHS Wiltshire Clinical Commissioning Group

Medicines Optimisation

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Monitoring²

Patients should have their pre-injection blood tests as usual.

For patients with good renal function (creatinine clearance \geq 35ml/min) who have not had any previous problems with post injection hypocalcaemia, the recommended blood tests at 4 weeks post injection could be *cancelled* if patients are asymptomatic.

For patients with poor renal function (creatinine clearance \leq 35ml/min), ideally weekly blood tests for 4 weeks post injection should continue as per BCAP shared care guidelines and policy. If patients have had a number of previous injections with no monitoring problems, a reduced blood monitoring regime can be discussed on an individual basis

All patients should be on calcium and vitamin D supplementation unless previously advised otherwise

Patient choice

If patients do not wish to go ahead with treatment despite the above, a risk-benefit discussion should take place and be documented in the clinical record.

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Resources:

¹ See [NICE NG167](#) COVID-19 rapid guideline: Rheumatological autoimmune, inflammatory and metabolic bone disorders

2. The Royal Osteoporosis Society [Health Care Professionals / Denosumab \(Prolia\) treatment and the COVID-19 pandemic](https://theros.org.uk/) (<https://theros.org.uk/>)

3. [EMC Medicines.org.uk](https://www.emcmedicines.org.uk) Prolia 60 mg solution for injection in pre-filled syringe

4. BSW Formulary Shared Care [BSWformulary.nhs.uk](https://www.bswformulary.nhs.uk)

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