

BREAST CANCER Bisphosphonates

Bisphosphonates may be used as part of treatment to reduce the risk of primary breast cancer spreading. Bisphosphonates are drugs used to slow down or prevent bone damage. You may hear bisphosphonates called bone-hardening or bone strengthening treatment.

They're often prescribed for people who are at risk of, or have, osteoporosis. Some treatments for breast cancer increase your risk of getting osteoporosis and your bones breaking (fractures). Bisphosphonates reduce this risk.

Bisphosphonates are also prescribed as treatment for people with secondary breast cancer in the bone. This is because they can help strengthen existing bone and reduce the damage caused by the cancer.

Recent research has shown bisphosphonates may help to reduce the risk of breast cancer spreading to the bones and elsewhere in the body in post-menopausal women being treated for primary breast cancer.

It's not yet known what the best length of time to take bisphosphonates for primary breast cancer is, but it's likely you'll have them for a minimum of three years.

Like all drugs bisphosphonates have some side effects. These vary according to which drug you're having and your treatment team will explain them to you. Two rare side effects of taking bisphosphonates include having an effect on the way the kidneys work and osteonecrosis of the jaw (when bone in the jaw dies).