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On Drugs and Therapeutics

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IN BRIEF

Effervescent Alendronate

A new effervescent formulation of alendronate (*Binosto* – Mission) was recently approved by the FDA for treatment of osteoporosis. The new 70-mg effervescent tablet is considered bioequivalent to the usual 70-mg tablet formulations of alendronate (*Fosamax*, and generics), which are difficult to swallow and can cause esophageal injury.¹ No published studies of the new formulation are available.

LABELING — The new strawberry-flavored effervescent tablet should be dissolved over at least 5 minutes in 4 ounces of water (not mineral or flavored water) and stirred for 10 seconds before drinking. As with tablet formulations of alendronate, the labeling of the effervescent solution says it should be taken once each week in the morning upon rising for the day, at least 30 minutes before eating, drinking or taking other medications, and the patient should remain upright during that interval.

COST — A monthly 4-pack of 70-mg *Binosto* tablets costs \$140.² A monthly supply of 4 generic 70-mg alendronate tablets costs \$9.99 at some large discount pharmacies.

CONCLUSION — *Binosto* is an expensive new effervescent tablet formulation of alendronate that is dissolved in water and taken as a solution. The solution should be easier to swallow than the regular tablets and theoretically might be better tolerated, but no comparative studies are available.

1. Drugs for postmenopausal osteoporosis. *Treat Guidel Med Lett* 2011; 9:67.
2. Wholesale acquisition cost (WAC). Source: PricePointRx™ October 5, 2012. Reprinted with permission by FDB, Inc. All rights reserved. ©2012. <http://www.firstdatabank.com/support/drug-pricing-policy.aspx>. Actual retail prices may be higher.

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