



# Bone Basics

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National Osteoporosis Foundation  
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## GENERIC ALENDRONATE (FOSAMAX®)

Many people who take Fosamax® tablets can now purchase less expensive generic versions of this osteoporosis medication. The generic name is alendronate sodium or alendronate. Generic medications have the same active ingredients as the brand names, but they sell at a cheaper price.

Alendronate is the first generic medication that is approved to treat osteoporosis. Like other new medications, Fosamax® was protected by a patent when it first became available in 1995. In February of 2008, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced the approval of generic alendronate.

Before the FDA approved Fosamax® (alendronate), the medication went through research and testing, including clinical trials. Because the FDA does not require additional research and testing for generic medications, they cost less to produce and sell.

Many people ask if generic alendronate will work in the same way as Fosamax®. The FDA offers the following information about generic medications when compared with the brand-name version of the same medication:

- Generic medications use the same active ingredients.
- Generic medications have the same risks and benefits.
- Generic medications must be administered in the same way (for example: taken by pill or injection).
- Generic medications have the same dosage, quality, strength, purity and stability.
- Generic medications work in the same way and in the same amount of time.

The companies currently approved to sell generic alendronate in the U.S., are Barr Pharmaceuticals, Inc., Teva Pharmaceuticals USA and Watson Pharmaceuticals, Inc.

While all brand-name and generic versions of the same medication have the same active ingredients, the inactive ingredients can differ. Inactive ingredients can make up a medication's coating, filler and flavoring. In rare cases, a person can be allergic to an inactive ingredient in a brand-name or a generic medication. The chart below lists the inactive ingredients in the different versions of alendronate.

Before switching to a generic medication, talk to your healthcare provider or pharmacist about any possible differences between the two medications and let him or her know if you have any allergies.

Generic alendronate is available in daily doses of 5 mg and 10 mg and weekly doses of 35 mg and 70 mg. Currently, generic alendronate is not available with vitamin D. If you switch from Fosamax plus D™ to a generic medication, make sure you get the vitamin D you need from a supplement.

Anyone with serious side effects or concerns about a medication should contact the FDA by calling (800) 332-1088 or visiting [www.fda.gov/medwatch](http://www.fda.gov/medwatch). For more information about generic medications, visit the Office of Generic Drugs at [www.fda.gov/cder/ogd](http://www.fda.gov/cder/ogd).

To learn more about alendronate or other osteoporosis medications, visit [www.nof.org](http://www.nof.org) or call NOF toll free at (800) 231-4222 and ask for our information sheet on osteoporosis medications.

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### Inactive Ingredients in Alendronate (Fosamax®)

Barr Laboratories, Inc. (Generic)	Merck & Co. (Fosamax® Brand)	Teva Pharmaceuticals (Generic)	Watson Pharmaceuticals, Inc. (Generic)
Croscarmellose sodium	Croscarmellose sodium	Croscarmellose sodium	Croscarmellose sodium
Magnesium stearate	Magnesium stearate	Magnesium stearate	Magnesium stearate
Microcrystalline cellulose	Microcrystalline cellulose	Microcrystalline cellulose	Microcrystalline cellulose
Mannitol	Anhydrous lactose	No ingredient	Anhydrous lactose