



National Prescribing Service Limited

MEDIA RELEASE

4 December 2008

Information for consumers about new treatments added to the PBS

New medicines recently added to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) for osteoporosis and pain relief are reviewed in the latest edition of the National Prescribing Service's [Medicine Update](#).

Medicine Update is an online consumer publication that provides independent information on new medicines recently listed on the PBS. It explains what the new medicines do, possible side effects, and discusses the similarities and differences between the new medicine and other medicines for the condition.

In the December issue, *Medicine Update* considers the benefits of zoledronic acid (Aclasta), a once a year bisphosphonate treatment for osteoporosis, and tramadol (Durotram XR), a new once-a-day form of an existing pain relief medicine.

Zoledronic acid belongs to the same family as other medicines for osteoporosis such as risedronate (eg. Actonel) and alendronate (eg. Fosamax). It is administered intravenously once a year, while the other medicines are taken as tablets once a day or once a week. People who need calcium and vitamin D supplements will still need to take them regularly as directed by their healthcare professional.

Evidence from clinical trials has shown that zoledronic acid improves the strength of bones and can prevent fractures, but as with all medicines patients need to consider the possible risks and benefits, says Executive Manager of Quality Use of Medicines (QUM) Programs for NPS, Karen Kaye.

"Like all new medicines zoledronic acid has been through clinical trials and tests, but it has not been used to treat osteoporosis for as long as some other medicines. It is very important to discuss the benefits and potential risks with your doctor to help decide whether this medicine may be the best choice for you," Ms Kaye said.

Tramadol (Durotram XR), also reviewed in this edition of *Medicine Update*, is a new formulation of an existing pain relief medicine that releases the active ingredient over a 24-hour period.

There are several other forms of tramadol already available under different brand names. Some forms are taken every four to eight hours, some are taken twice a day and the new formulation is taken once a day.

"Given the number of different forms of tramadol available it's very important that people understand which form of tramadol they have been prescribed and often they should take their prescribed dose. When starting any new medicine you should read the consumer medicine information leaflet and talk to your doctor or pharmacist if you have any questions," Ms Kaye said.

For more information download [Medicine Update](#) at www.nps.org.au or contact the **NPS Medicine Line** on 1300 888 763 to speak to a pharmacist (Mon-Fri, 9am-6pm EST for the cost of a local call, mobile calls more).

ENDS

Media enquiries to Katie Butt, Media Adviser, 0419 618 365 or kbutt@nps.org.au

The National Prescribing Service Limited (NPS) is an independent, non-profit organisation for Quality Use of Medicines funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing.

**ABN 61 082 034 393 | Level 7/418A Elizabeth Street Surry Hills 2010 | PO Box 1147 Strawberry Hills 2012
Phone: 02 8217 8700 | Fax: 02 9211 7578 | email: info@nps.org.au | web: www.nps.org.au**