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Prolia and Atypical Fractures

There has been recent media coverage concerning a rare atypical femoral fracture that may be a side effect of denosumab (Prolia), an osteoporosis medication manufactured by Amgen. Osteoporosis Canada’s Scientific Advisory Council has reviewed the information from Amgen and Health Canada and provides the following statement for patients:

An atypical femoral fracture is a rare type of fracture of the thigh bone. It often has warning signs of thigh or groin pain that may occur for several weeks or months before the fracture occurs. This fracture can usually be found on a simple X-ray but sometimes a bone scan or MRI is needed.

Some of these rare fractures have occurred in individuals on long-term use of certain osteoporosis medications. However, they have also been seen to occur in people who have not taken any osteoporosis medications. Therefore, it is not yet certain what role the long-term use of osteoporosis medications plays in these rare fractures.

If you have osteoporosis or are at high risk of fracture, the benefits of taking a bone drug far outweigh the risks of experiencing a rare fracture of the thigh bone. However, if you do experience persistent thigh or groin pain please contact your doctor. For more information on osteoporosis drugs and their side effects please follow this link for Osteoporosis Canada's Drug Treatments Fact Sheet.