

MEDICATION RELATED OSTEONECROSIS OF THE JAW (MRONJ)



Peter Mac
Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre
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A health mouth can reduce pain. This means maintaining good oral hygiene and regular dental appointments before, during and after your treatment.

What is MRONJ?

Exposed bone in the mouth is a rare (side effect) if you are taking bone-modifying drugs. It is medically known as, Medication-Related Osteonecrosis of the Jaw (MRONJ).

It occurs when your gum does not heal properly within 8 weeks after a tooth has been removed.

Sometimes the bones in your mouth may become exposed even without removal of a tooth. It is often painless, but can be associated with:

- pain
- enlargement
- and presence of pus in your mouth.

How common is MRONJ?

The risk of MRONJ is low. However, if you are taking bone-modifying drugs as part of your cancer treatment, you are at greater risk.

You will also continue to be at risk of MRONJ after treatment and after you have stopped taking the bone modifying drug.

For more information, ask your doctor, medical oncologist or dental professional.

Reducing the risk of MRONJ

For you to prevent MRONJ, we recommend:

- Maintaining good oral hygiene.
 - Brush your teeth twice a day with toothpaste that has fluoride.
 - Use interdental brushes and/or floss to clean in between your teeth.
- Ensure your dentures fit well. Poor fitting dentures may rub and cause damage. If this happens, remove your dentures and seek help from your dental care provider.
- Attend regular dental check-ups with your dental professional.
- After starting bone-modifying drugs, avoid invasive surgery.
- Cease smoking as it increases the chance of tooth decay and gum disease.
- Reduce frequent snacking and drinks containing sugar.

Monitor your mouth

Things to look out for include:

- Pain
- Exposed bone
- Numbness, heaviness, pins and needles or other unusual feelings
- Loose teeth
- Pus or discharge.



Important information

If you have any concerns about your teeth or mouth please talk to your dental professional. You can contact the Peter Mac Cancer Centre Dental Oncology on (03) 8559 6443.

In the event of an emergency, please dial **000** for an ambulance or go to your nearest hospital emergency department.