



Oral Corticosteroids: Prednisone & Methylprednisolone

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MEDICATION DO'S AND DON'TS

- Do not drink alcohol before or after taking this medicine
- Do not take more than one dose at a time
- Do not increase the dosage unless directed by your healthcare provider.
- Do not start taking any new medicine (including birth control pills) without first telling your healthcare provider
- Do not keep this medicine in the bathroom because of the heat and moisture.
- Be sure that you tell your healthcare providers who treat you about all medicines you are taking, including nonprescription products

WHY ARE THESE MEDICATIONS PRESCRIBED?

These medications are used to relieve inflammation in various parts of the problems, allergies, asthma, arthritis, eye inflammation, and other conditions as determined by your healthcare provider.

DOSING

Dosing of both prednisone and methylprednisolone is variable and depends on the condition being treated and on your other underlying health issues.

Two general principles guide dosing:

- Both medications are started at moderate to high doses, with the dosage gradually reduced over days, weeks, or months.
- To reduce the risk of side effects and complications, take the medication exactly as prescribed by your doctor and only for the length of time prescribed.

These medications should never be stopped or started without the approval of a health care provider.

PROPER USE

Take the medicine by mouth right AFTER a full breakfast to reduce stomach upset. Do not take more or less than what is prescribed. Do not miss doses. If you do miss a dose, ask your health care provider what to do.

POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS

- Serious but rare side effects include difficulty breathing, closing of your throat; swelling of your lips, tongue, or face; rash, blurred vision, severe headache, weight gain of > 5 pounds in a day or two. If any of these side effects occur, call your healthcare provider right away.
- Other side effects include cataract formation, bone loss, osteoporosis, glaucoma (increased pressure in the eyes), joint pain (avascular necrosis of the hip) increased hair growth, acne, changes in behavior, thinning of skin. These side effects are more likely when these medications are taken in LARGE doses or for a LONG time.

RECOMMENDATIONS WHILE TAKING CORTICOSTEROIDS

- If you have high blood pressure or diabetes, you should monitor your blood pressure or glucose levels very carefully with the aid of you primary care provider.
- If you experience indigestion or heartburn, it may be necessary to take special precautions to protect your stomach. Discuss this with you healthcare provider
- Supplemental calcium and vitamin D (calcium 1200-1500 mg and Vitamin D 400-800 IU daily) are also recommended
- Bone density exams should be performed, if indicated.

POSSIBLE DRUG INTERACTIONS

Taking corticosteroids with other medications may increase or decrease the effects of the other medications. These combinations may cause harmful side effects. Some examples of medications that may interact with corticosteroids are aspirin and salicylates, barbiturates such as Phenobarbital, phenytoin, and rifampin. Tell your healthcare provider about all the medications you are taking.