Oral Steroids (Prednisone & Medrol)
Information Sheet

Introduction

Steroids are used to reduce inflammation in various parts of the body. They are prescribed to treat multiple medical conditions such as those related to the skin, allergies, sinuses, asthma, arthritis, eye inflammation, and many others. Dosing of steroids is variable and dependent on many factors. Steroids are usually started at a relatively high dose and tapered to lower doses over days to weeks, and in some cases, months.

How to Take

- These medications should be taken on a FULL STOMACH right AFTER breakfast to lessen the chance of an upset stomach.
- Do not miss a dose.
- If you miss more than one dose, please contact your healthcare provider.

Possible Side Effects

1. Serious But Rare Side Effects
   (report to your healthcare provider right away)
   - Rash
   - Blurred Vision
   - Increased Urination
   - Unusual Thirst
   - Significant Mood Changes
   - Irregular Heartbeat
   - Stomach Ulcers with Bleeding

2. More Common Side Effects
   - Insomnia
   - Nervousness/Agitation
   - Increased Appetite and Indigestion
   - Dizziness or Lightheadedness
   - Headache
   - Sweating

3. Significant Side Effects When Taken in Large Doses for a Long Period of Time
   - Hip or Shoulder Avascular Necrosis (requires surgery for repair/replacement)
   - Cataract Formation
   - Osteoporosis
   - Glaucoma (increased pressure in the eyes)
   - Unmasking a Tendency Toward Diabetes
   - Weight Gain
   - Roundness of the Face

4. Other Side Effects
   - Tuberculosis Reactivation
   - Feeling Anxious or Depressed
   - Muscle or Joint Pain
   - Increased Blood Pressure
   - Immune System Suppression

Recommendations While Taking Oral Steroids

1. If you have HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE/HYPERTENSION or DIABETES you should monitor your blood pressure and glucose levels carefully with the aid of your primary medical provider.
2. If you experience INDIGESTION or HEARTBURN it may be necessary to take precautions to protect your stomach. You may take over-the-counter Tums, Pepcid, Zantac, or Prilosec as directed. If these do not work, discuss this with your healthcare provider.
3. Supplemental Calcium (1200 – 1500 mg) and Vitamin D (400 – 800 IU) should be taken daily.
4. Bone density exams may be necessary for patients who require long-term steroid dosing.

Possible Drug Interactions

Steroids may interfere with the normal activity of some medications and may cause harmful side effects. Please verify your medication interactions with your pharmacist before starting steroids.

Medication Do’s and Don’ts

- Do not drink alcohol before or after taking this medication.
- Do not abruptly stop taking this medication. If you have been taking it for an extended period of time you may need a gradual tapering dose of the medication.
- Do not take more than one dose as prescribed at a time.
- Do not increase the amount of the dose unless directed by your healthcare provider.
- Do not start taking a new medicine (including birth control and over-the-counter medications) without first telling your healthcare provider or pharmacist.
- Do not store this medicine in the bathroom because of the heat and moisture.

Be sure to tell all of your healthcare providers who treat you about all of your medications you are taking, including nonprescription over-the-counter medications.
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