

Prednisone



What is prednisone?

- A corticosteroid medication used in combination with other medications to control swelling from diseases of the immune system such as vasculitis (inflammation in the blood vessels) or glomerulonephritis (inflammation of the kidneys).
- Prednisone lowers your body's harmful response to diseases of the immune system. It is often used with other medications, such as cyclosporine, tacrolimus, mycophenolate or cyclophosphamide.
- Available as 1 mg, 5 mg and 50 mg tablets. The tablets are scored and can be split in half if required.

How do I use it?

- Take the medication regularly, usually once daily or every other day.
- Prednisone is best taken in the morning (e.g. 8:00 or 9:00 am) to match the normal production of a natural steroid hormone in the body called cortisol.
- Prednisone should be taken with food to minimize stomach upset.
- If you have been taking prednisone for a long time, do not stop taking it suddenly. If prednisone is to be stopped, the dose is usually decreased slowly to ensure no flare-ups and/or to allow your own body to produce cortisol again.
- The starting dose of prednisone is based on your weight and is specific to your medical condition. Do not change your dose without talking to your doctor or pharmacist.

What do I do if I miss a dose?

- If you take prednisone once daily, take the missed dose as soon as you remember unless it is already the next day. Do not "double-up" the dose.
- If you take prednisone every other day, take the missed dose as soon as you remember unless it is already the day of your next dose. Go back to your normal schedule. Do not "double-up" the dose.

What side effects should I expect?

- Common side effects that can occur early include nausea, stomach upset, increased appetite, weight gain, mood swings (a feeling of high spirits/depression), water retention (swollen ankles), increase in blood pressure, or increase in blood sugars.
- These side effects are often related to the dose and will decrease once the dose is lowered. If these symptoms continue or become bothersome, talk to your doctor or pharmacist.
- Other side effects include stomach ulcers/bleeding, anxiety and/or problems sleeping, cataracts, glaucoma, slow wound healing, electrolyte changes, weak bones, damage to the hip joints (rarely), change in body fat (more on the face and neck), easy bruising, stretch marks and decreased production of cortisol by the body.
- Since prednisone lowers your body's ability to fight off infections, wash your hands often and stay away from people with infections, colds or flu. Contact your doctor right away if you feel you may have a cold or other infection, e.g. if you

experience high fever, chills, very bad sore throat, chest congestion, pain with passing urine, etc. Wash hands often. Stay away from people with infections, colds or flu.

- If you develop an illness or medical emergency, always inform your doctors that you are taking prednisone. Your doctor may need to increase your prednisone dose for the short term.

Drug interactions with prednisone

- Discuss with your doctor or pharmacist before starting any new medications (non-prescription and prescription), herbal products or vitamins.
- Do not receive any vaccines without talking with your doctor because the use with prednisone may either increase your chance of an infection or make the vaccine not work as well.

Is prednisone harmful during pregnancy?

- The use of prednisone during pregnancy and breastfeeding should be reviewed carefully by and discussed with your physician (ideally before pregnancy).

How do I store the medication?

- Store at room temperature away from moisture and sunlight. Do not store in the bathroom. Keep out of reach of children.

Reordering procedure

- To refill your medication, speak to your doctor or pharmacist.