

What is prednisone?

- Prednisone is a medicine that helps reduce swelling and calm down your immune system (the part of your body that fights illness). It is used to treat conditions where the immune system attacks the body, like swelling in the blood vessels or kidneys.
- It can be taken by itself or with other medicines. Your doctor will tell you which ones.
- It comes in small tablets of different strengths: 1 mg, 5 mg, and 50 mg. The tablets can be cut in half if needed.

How do I use it?

- Take prednisone every day at the same time, or every other day, as your doctor tells you.
- It is best to take it in the morning (around 8:00 or 9:00 am) because that is when your body naturally makes a similar hormone called cortisol.
- Always take it with food so it does not upset your stomach.
- Do not stop taking prednisone suddenly. Your dose is based on your weight and your health condition. Never change your dose without talking to your doctor or pharmacist first.
- If you miss a dose:
 - If you take prednisone once a day: take the missed dose as soon as you remember, but skip it if it is already the next day. Do not take two doses at once.
 - If you take it every other day: take the missed dose as soon as you remember, but skip it if it is already the day of your next dose. Go back to your regular schedule. Do not take two doses at once.

What side effects should I expect?

- Early side effects may include feeling sick to your stomach, feeling more hungry than usual, gaining weight, mood changes (feeling very happy or very sad, anxious), trouble sleeping, puffy ankles, higher blood pressure, or higher blood sugar.
- These side effects usually get better when your dose is lowered. Talk to your doctor or pharmacist if they bother you.
- Other possible side effects include stomach pain or bleeding, eye problems, slow healing of cuts, weak bones, changes in where your body stores fat (more on your face and neck), easy bruising, acne and stretch marks.
- Prednisone makes it harder for your body to fight infections. Wash your hands often and stay away from people who are sick. Call your doctor right away if you get a fever, chills, a bad sore throat, chest congestion, or pain when you pee.
- If you get sick or have a medical emergency, always tell your doctors you are taking prednisone. They may need to change your dose for a short time.

Drug interactions with prednisone

- Always talk to your doctor or pharmacist before taking any new medicine, vitamin, or herbal product while on prednisone.
- Do not get any vaccines without checking with your doctor first. Prednisone can make vaccines less effective or raise your risk of getting an infection.

Is prednisone harmful during pregnancy or breastfeeding?

- Talk to your doctor about taking prednisone if you are pregnant, planning to become pregnant, or breastfeeding. It is best to have this talk before becoming pregnant.