

Methylprednisolone (Medrol, Solu-Medrol)

About This Drug

Methylprednisolone is a steroid that may be used to treat cancer. It is given in the vein (IV), as an injection in your muscle (intramuscularly) or orally (by mouth).

Possible Side Effects

- Increased risk for cataracts, glaucoma, or infections of the eye
- Abnormal heartbeat
- Headache
- Increased sweating
- Nausea
- Aggravation of stomach ulcers
- Pain in your abdomen and /or bloating (distention)
- Electrolyte changes
- Changes in your liver function
- Blood sugar levels may change
- Increased appetite (increased hunger)
- Swelling of the hands, feet, or any other part of the body
- Weight gain
- Increased risk of infections
- Changes in mood, which may include depression or a feeling of extreme well-being
- Trouble sleeping
- Feeling restless (unable to relax)
- Muscle loss and/or weakness (lack of muscle strength)
- Increased risk of developing osteoporosis - your bones may become weak and brittle
- Skin changes such as rash, dryness, redness
- High blood pressure

Note: *Not all possible side effects are included above.*

Warnings and Precautions

- Severe infections, which can be life-threatening



- High blood pressure and changes in electrolytes, which can cause fluid build-up around your heart, lungs or elsewhere.
- Increased risk of developing a hole in your stomach, small, and/or large intestine if you have ulcers in the lining of your stomach and/or intestine, or have diverticulitis, ulcerative colitis and/or other diseases that affect the gastrointestinal tract.
- Effects on the endocrine glands including pituitary, adrenals, and thyroid during or after use of this medications
- Severe changes in your liver function, which can be life-threatening.
- Severe depression and other psychiatric disorders such as mood changes
- Muscle weakness (lack of muscle strength) with high doses of this drug
- A rare type of sarcoma has been reported to happen in patients taking methylprednisolone
- Allergic reactions, including anaphylaxis are rare but may happen in some patients. Signs of allergic reaction to this drug may be swelling of the face, feeling like your tongue or throat are swelling, trouble breathing, rash, itching, fever, chills, feeling dizzy, and/or feeling that your heart is beating in a fast or not normal way. **If this happens, do not take another dose of this drug. You should get urgent medical treatment**

Note: Some of the side effects above are very rare. If you have concerns and/or questions, please discuss them with your medical team.

Important Information

- Talk to your doctor or your nurse before stopping this medication, it should be stopped gradually. Depending on the dose and length of treatment, you could experience serious side effects if stopped abruptly (suddenly).
- Talk to your doctor before receiving any vaccinations during your treatment. Some vaccinations are not recommended while receiving methylprednisolone.
- If you are taking immunosuppressant doses of methylprednisolone, avoid exposure to chicken pox or measles. If you think you have been exposed, contact your physician as soon as possible.

How to Take Your Medication

- **For Oral (by mouth):** You can take the medicine with or without food, but it is preferable to be taken with food, especially if you have nausea or upset stomach.
- **Missed dose:** If you vomit or miss a dose, contact your doctor for further instructions. Do not take 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.
- **Handling:** Wash your hands after handling your medicine, your caretakers should not handle your medicine with bare hands and should wear latex gloves.
- **Storage:** Store this medicine in the original container at room temperature. Discuss with your nurse or your doctor how to dispose of unused medicine.

Treating Side Effects

- To decrease the risk of infection, wash your hands regularly.



- Avoid close contact with people who have a cold, the flu, or other infections.
- Take your temperature as your doctor or nurse tells you, and whenever you feel like you may have a fever.
- Drink plenty of fluids (a minimum of eight glasses per day is recommended).
- To help with nausea, eat small, frequent meals instead of three large meals a day. Choose foods and drinks that are at room temperature. Ask your nurse or doctor about other helpful tips and medicine that is available to help stop or lessen these symptoms.
- Manage tiredness by pacing your activities for the day. Be sure to include periods of rest between energy-draining activities.
- To help with muscle weakness, get regular exercise. If you feel too tired to exercise vigorously, try taking a short walk.
- Keeping your pain under control is important to your well-being. Please tell your doctor or nurse if you are experiencing pain.
- If you have diabetes, keep good control of your blood sugar level. Tell your nurse or your doctor if your glucose levels are higher or lower than normal.
- Moisturize your skin several times a day.
- Avoid sun exposure and apply sunscreen routinely when outdoors.
- If you get a rash do not put anything on it unless your doctor or nurse says you may. Keep the area around the rash clean and dry. Ask your doctor for medicine if your rash bothers you.

Food and Drug Interactions

- This drug may interact with grapefruit and grapefruit juice. Talk to your doctor as this could make side effects worse.
- Check with your doctor or pharmacist about all other prescription medicines and over-the-counter medicines and dietary supplements (vitamins, minerals, herbs, and others) you are taking before starting this medicine as there are known drug interactions with methylprednisolone. Also, check with your doctor or pharmacist before starting any new prescription or over-the-counter medicines, or dietary supplements to make sure that there are no interactions.
- There are known interactions of methylprednisolone with other medicines and products like aspirin, ibuprofen, and other nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory agents. Ask your doctor what over-the-counter (OTC) medicines you can take for fever, headache and muscle and joint pain.
- There are known interactions of methylprednisolone with blood thinning medicine such as warfarin. Ask your doctor what precautions you should take.

When to Call the Doctor

Call your doctor or nurse if you have any of these symptoms and/or any new or unusual symptoms:

- Fever of 100.4° F (38° C) or higher
- Chills
- Blurred vision or other changes in eyesight
- Severe mood changes such as depression or unusual thoughts and/or behaviors
- Thoughts of hurting yourself or others, and suicide



- Feeling abnormally well
- Lose interest in your daily activities that you used to enjoy and feeling this way every day, and/or you feel hopelessness
- A headache that does not go away
- Tiredness that interferes with your daily activities
- Feeling dizzy or lightheaded
- Chest pain or symptoms of a heart attack. Most heart attacks involve pain in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes. The pain may go away and come back or it can be constant. It can feel like pressure, squeezing, fullness, or pain. Sometimes pain is felt in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw, or stomach. **If any of these symptoms last 2 minutes, call 911.**
- Trouble breathing
- Feeling that your heart is beating in a fast or not normal way (palpitations)
- Feel irritable, nervous, or restless
- Trouble falling or staying asleep
- Nausea that stops you from eating or drinking or is not relieved by prescribed medicine
- Pain in your abdomen or uncomfortable bloating that does not go away
- Difficulty swallowing
- Heartburn or indigestion
- Swelling of the hands, feet, or any other part of the body
- Weight gain of 5 pounds in one week (fluid retention)
- Abnormal blood sugar
- Unusual thirst, passing urine often, headache, sweating, shakiness, irritability
- Severe muscle weakness
- A new rash or a rash that is not relieved by prescribed medicines
- Dry skin that is bothersome
- Signs of possible liver problems: dark urine, pale bowel movements, pain in your abdomen, feeling very tired and weak, unusual itching, or yellowing of the eyes or skin
- Signs of allergic reaction: swelling of the face, feeling like your tongue or throat are swelling, trouble breathing, rash, itching, fever, chills, feeling dizzy, and/or feeling that your heart is beating in a fast or not normal way. **If this happens, call 911 for emergency care.**
- If you think you may be pregnant

Reproduction Warnings

- **Pregnancy warning:** It is not known if this drug may harm an unborn child. For this reason, be sure to talk with your doctor if you are pregnant or planning to become pregnant while receiving this drug. Let your doctor know right away if you think you may be pregnant.
- **Breastfeeding warning:** This drug can pass into breast milk. For this reason, women should talk to their doctor about the risks and benefits of breastfeeding during treatment with this drug because this drug may enter the breast milk and cause harm to a breastfeeding baby.
- **Fertility warning:** Fertility studies have not been done with this drug.



Revised October 2021

