

Prednisone

About This Drug

Prednisone is a steroid that may be used to treat cancer. It is given orally (by mouth).

Possible Side Effects

- Blood sugar levels may change
- Swelling of the hands, feet, or any other part of the body
- Increased appetite (increased hunger)
- Weight gain
- Changes in mood, which may include depression or a feeling of extreme well-being
- High blood pressure

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

Warnings and Precautions

- High blood pressure and changes in electrolytes, which can cause fluid build-up around your heart, lungs or elsewhere.
- Increased risk of severe infections, which can be life-threatening.
- 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.
- Severe depression and other psychiatric disorders such as mood changes
- Effects on the endocrine glands including pituitary, adrenals and thyroid during or after use of this medication.
- Muscle loss and/or weakness (lack of muscle strength)
- A rare type of sarcoma has been reported to happen in patients taking prednisone
- Increased risk of developing osteoporosis - your bones may become weak and brittle
- Increased risk for cataracts, glaucoma or infections of the eye and/or other changes in eyesight

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 prednisone.
- If you are taking immunosuppressant doses of prednisone, 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

- Swallow the medicine as prescribed by your doctor.
- **Missed dose:** If you miss a dose, take the missed dose as soon as you remember. If it is almost time for the next dose, skip the missed dose and take the medicine at the next regularly schedule time. Do not take 2 doses at the same time and do not double up on the next dose.
- **Storage:** Store this medicine in the original container at room temperature, protect from light and moisture. Discuss with your nurse or your doctor how to dispose of unused medicine.

Treating Side Effects

- Drink plenty of fluids (a minimum of eight glasses per day is recommended).
- 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.
- 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.
- To help with muscle weakness, get regular exercise. If you feel too tired to exercise vigorously, try taking a short walk.

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 prednisone. 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 prednisone 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 prednisone with blood thinning medicine such as warfarin. Ask your doctor what precautions you should take.
- This drug may interact with St. John's Wort and may lower the levels of the drug in your body, which can make it less effective.

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
- A headache that does not go away
- Blurry vision or other changes in eyesight
- Feeling abnormally well
- Severe mood changes such as depression or unusual thoughts and/or behaviors
- Thoughts of hurting yourself or others, and suicide
- Lose interest in your daily activities that you used to enjoy and feeling this way every day, and/or you feel hopelessness
- Tiredness and/or weakness that interferes with your daily activities
- Trouble breathing
- Feeling that your heart is beating in a fast or not normal way (palpitations)
- Chest pain
- Nausea that stops you from eating or drinking and/or is not relieved by prescribed medicines
- Throwing up more than 3 times a day
- Severe abdominal pain that does not go away
- Difficulty swallowing
- Heartburn or indigestion
- Abnormal blood sugar
- Unusual thirst, passing urine often, headache, sweating, shakiness, irritability
- Signs of infection: fever or chills, cough, trouble breathing, severe pain in your abdomen, difficulty urinating, burning or pain when you pass urine, redness and/or swelling of the skin
- Swelling of the hands, feet, or any other part of the body
- Severe muscle weakness
- Weight gain of 5 pounds in one week (fluid retention)
- 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 December 2022

