

## Prednisone

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### About This Medicine

Prednisone is a steroid that may be used to treat cancer and to decrease inflammation. 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. Your side effects may be different depending on your cancer diagnosis, condition, or if you are receiving other medicines in combination. Please discuss any concerns or questions with your medical team.*

### Warnings and Precautions

- Allergic reactions, including anaphylaxis, are rare but may happen in some patients. Signs of allergic reaction to this medicine 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 medicine. You should get urgent medical treatment.**
- 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 an abnormal 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 medicine.
- 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 (weak and brittle bones)
- Increased risk for cataracts (clouding of lens in your eye), 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 medicine, 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 doctor as soon as possible.
- Prednisone may cause slow wound healing. If you must have emergency surgery or have an accident that results in a wound, tell the doctor that you are on prednisone.

## How to Take Your Medicine

- Swallow the medicine as prescribed by your doctor.
- **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.
- **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 enough fluids to keep your urine pale yellow.
- 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, with your doctor's approval. If you feel too tired to exercise vigorously, try taking a short walk.

## Food and Medicine Interactions

- This medicine 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 medicine 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 medicine may interact with St. John's Wort and may lower the levels of the medicine 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 irritable, nervous or restless
- 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 sleeping
- 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
- 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
- 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.**



- 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 medicine 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 medicine. Let your doctor know right away if you think you may be pregnant.
- **Breastfeeding warning:** This medicine 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 medicine because this medicine may enter the breast milk and cause harm to a breastfeeding baby.
- **Fertility warning:** Fertility studies have not been done with this medicine. Talk with your doctor or nurse if you plan to have children.

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