

PREDNISONE

Prednisone is a drug similar to Cortisone, a hormone naturally produced by the body that decreases inflammation, redness, and swelling and may also relieve pain. At very high doses, this drug and other drugs like it, can shut down the immune system, that is they can increase the risk of serious infections.

HOW TO USE THIS MEDICATION

Take Prednisone with food or a glass of milk in order to prevent stomach upset. Call your family doctor if you develop stomach upset, stomach pain, or heartburn, especially if this pain awakens you during the night. Do not try to treat this yourself.

If we have prescribed only one dose of this medication every day, it is best to take it with breakfast or before 9:00 a.m.

If you forget to take a dose, take it as soon as possible. However, if it is almost time for your next dose, do not take the missed dose. Instead, continue with your regular dosing schedule.

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS

Women who are pregnant (or planning to become pregnant) or breast-feeding should tell their doctor before taking this medicine.

It is best not to drink alcoholic beverages while taking this medicine, because the combination can cause serious stomach problems.

Do not take any more of this medicine than prescribed, and do **NOT** stop taking this medicine suddenly without the approval of your doctor. It may be necessary for your doctor to slowly reduce the dose since your body gets used to the medicine.

Do not take aspirin, medicines containing aspirin, or medicines similar to aspirin (Motrin, Advil, Naprosin, etc.) without the approval of your doctor. Carefully check the contents of all non-prescription medications, as many of these contain aspirin.

Acetaminophen (Tylenol) is an acceptable painkiller while taking Prednisone.

While you are taking Prednisone, you may gain some weight. This can be due to an increased appetite or increased water and salt in your system. Your doctor may suggest that you lower the number of calories and/or decrease the amount of sodium that you eat.

You may find that you bruise more easily. Try to protect yourself from injuries in order to prevent bruising.

Diabetic patients should regularly check their sugar in their urine or blood and report unusual levels to their doctor.

Patients with high blood pressure should have their blood pressure checked regularly by their doctor while on this medication.

Carry an identification card with you at all times indicating that you are taking this medication. If you will be on this medication for longer than five days, you should consider having a **MEDIC-ALERT** bracelet or necklace made. It is very important to tell your dentist, pharmacist, and any other doctors that are treating you that you are on this medication even if you have been off of it for up to one year.

SIDE EFFECTS

Most people experience few or no side effects from this medication when taken in relatively low dosages for a short time. There is extensive clinical experience with this drug and potential side effects are well known. It is important if you experience any symptoms, that you report them properly to your doctor.

The most common side effects include mood changes, insomnia, stomach upset, and weight gain. Less common side effects include elevation in blood pressure, increase in blood sugar, chemical imbalances in the blood, increased susceptibility to infections, weakening of the bones, muscle weakness, stomach ulcers, menstrual irregularities, glaucoma, cataracts, poor wound healing, loss of blood supply to the hip bone, and changes in the skin.

It is important to emphasize that if you stop this medication abruptly, you should be under a doctor's care as you could become very ill.