



Provincial Health Services Authority

For the Patient: Prednisone

Other names: DELTASONE®

- **Prednisone** (PRED-nih-zone) is a steroid that is used to treat many medical problems including some kinds of cancer. It is a tablet that you take by mouth.
- It is important to **take** prednisone exactly as directed by your doctor. Make sure you understand the directions.
- Take prednisone **with food**. This helps prevent stomach problems.
- **For every other day dosing:**
 - Take your prednisone **in the morning** with breakfast. This mimics your body's natural rhythm of steroid production.
 - If you **miss a dose** of prednisone, take it as soon as you can. If it is over 24 hours since your missed dose, take the missed dose and then skip the following day.
- **For once a day dosing:**
 - Take your prednisone **in the morning** with breakfast. This mimics your body's natural rhythm of steroid production.
 - If you **miss a dose** of prednisone, take it as soon as you can if it is the same day as the missed dose. If you remember the next day, skip the missed dose and return to your usual dosing times.
- **For more than once a day dosing:**
 - Take your prednisone at **evenly spaced times** during the day starting with breakfast.
 - If you **miss a dose** of prednisone, take it as soon as you can. Take the rest of the day's doses at evenly spaced times. If you remember at the time for the next dose, take both doses and return to your usual dosing times.
- **Do not stop taking prednisone** without telling your doctor. If you are taking prednisone regularly, make sure that you always have a new supply on hand before you run out. After long-term use, your dose of prednisone will be reduced slowly before stopping. This helps your body adjust to making its own steroid again.
- **Store** prednisone tablets out of the reach of children, at room temperature, away from heat, light and moisture.
- Other drugs such as carbamazepine (TEGRETOL®), phenytoin (DILANTIN®) and primidone (MYSOLINE®) may **interact** with prednisone. Tell your doctor if you are taking these or any other drugs as your dose may need to be changed. There may be an increased risk of potassium problems with some drugs such as digoxin

(LANOXIN®) and some water pills (diuretics) such as furosemide (LASIX®) and hydrochlorothiazide (HYDRODIURIL®). Check with your doctor or pharmacist before you start taking any new drugs.

- Your doctor may tell you to follow a **diet** that is low in salt and sodium while high in calcium, potassium and protein. This helps prevent side effects with long-term use.
- **Drinking alcohol** may increase the risk of some side effects with prednisone. Discuss the safety of a drink of alcohol with your doctor.
- Prednisone may affect sperm production and may affect the baby if used during pregnancy. For women: It is best to **use birth control** while being treated with prednisone. Tell your doctor right away if you become pregnant. **Do not breast feed** during treatment with doses higher than 5 mg a day.
- **Tell** doctors or dentists that you are being treated with prednisone before you receive any treatment from them.
- If you are taking prednisone for more than a few days at a time, ask your doctor if you need to wear a **medical alert bracelet or tag** to inform doctors in an emergency as you may need extra steroids.

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
<p>Heartburn or nausea may occur. There may be an increased risk of stomach problems such as bleeding ulcers especially if you have had stomach problems before.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take your prednisone after eating. • Take antacids one hour before or two hours after prednisone. Antacids can reduce the amount of prednisone absorbed when taken at the same time. <p>Some medications such as ASA (e.g., ASPIRIN®) or ibuprofen (e.g., ADVIL®) may increase your risk of stomach problems.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not stop taking any medication that has been prescribed by your doctor (e.g., ASA for your heart). • For minor pain, try acetaminophen (e.g., TYLENOL®) first, but occasional use of ibuprofen may be acceptable.
<p>Increased appetite and weight gain may occur. With long-term use, your face and shoulders may become rounded even without weight gain. This will return to normal once you stop taking prednisone.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eat healthy, well balanced meals.

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
Swelling of hands, feet or lower legs may occur if your body retains extra fluid especially with long-term use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elevate your feet when sitting. • Avoid tight clothing. • Avoid foods with high salt or sodium.
Your body's ability to handle illness or injury is weakened by prednisone. This will return to normal after you stop taking prednisone, but may take up to a year after long-term use with high doses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check with your doctor if you have an infection, illness or injury. • You may need extra steroids to help you get better.
High blood pressure may occur with long-term use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check your blood pressure regularly. • Avoid foods with high salt or sodium.
Bone loss (osteoporosis) may occur with long-term use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the risk of bone loss with your doctor.
Sugar control may be affected in diabetic patients. Some people may become diabetic when treated with prednisone. (See below for "signs of blood sugar problems".)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check your blood sugar regularly if you are diabetic.

SEE YOUR DOCTOR AS SOON AS POSSIBLE (DURING OFFICE HOURS) IF YOU HAVE:

- Signs of an **infection** such as fever (over 100°F or 38°C); chills; cough; sore throat; pain or burning when you pass urine; redness, pain or swelling of any area of your body; sores forming anywhere on your body.
- Signs of **bleeding ulcers** such as continuing stomach or abdominal pain, blood in stool or black, tarry stool.
- Signs of **fluid problems** such as shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, swelling of feet or lower legs, rapid weight gain.
- Signs of **low potassium** such as vomiting, muscle cramps or weakness, numbness or tingling of the lower legs and feet, mental confusion.
- Signs of **blood sugar problems** such as thirst and frequent need to pass urine.
- Signs of **bone problems** such as pain in back, ribs, arms or legs.
- Changes in **eye sight**.

CHECK WITH YOUR DOCTOR IF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING CONTINUE OR BOTHER YOU:

- Uncontrolled nausea, vomiting or heartburn.
- Mood changes, nervousness, problems sleeping.
- Acne or other skin changes.
- Unusual bruising.
- Wounds that do not heal.
- For diabetic patients: uncontrolled blood sugars.
- For women: changes in menstrual periods.

