

## What do I need to know about Corticosteroids?

(say “kor-tih-koh-STAIR-oids”)

Other names for this medicine include: prednisone, hydrocortisone, and dexamethasone

Medicine is one of the tools your doctor has to treat your lupus. Taking medicine as your doctor suggests will improve your lupus. And it may prevent more serious health problems in the future. If you don't take your medicines correctly, you may be putting your health, and perhaps your life, at risk.

## Why am I taking this medicine?

To control the signs and symptoms of your lupus so that you feel better quickly. We use this medicine for short periods at high doses. This allows other medicines time to work. (This medicine is not the same as the steroids used illegally by some athletes to build muscles.)

## How fast does it work?

Corticosteroids work quickly. You may notice some symptoms start to get better within a few days.

## I'm feeling better. Can I stop taking my medicine?

No, even if you're feeling better, keep taking your medicine. Do not stop unless your doctor says it's O.K. to stop.

## Are there any side effects?

Side effects are unplanned symptoms (signs) or feelings you have when taking a medicine. Some side effects happen just when you start taking a medicine. Some happen only once in a while.

The side effects are related to how much medicine you take and how long you take it.

**IMPORTANT**

Tell your doctor right away about any unexpected signs or changes in the way you feel.

- If you have troublesome side effects, **don't stop taking your medicine.** There is a possibility of unpleasant withdrawal effects.
- This medicine can decrease the infection-fighting cells in your blood. Avoid being near people who are sick or have infections.
- Take extra care to clean and protect any open cuts or sores.

Side effects include:

- Increase in blood sugar. (You may pee more often.)
- Increased hunger
- Upset stomach
- Weight gain
- Water retention (causing swelling in your legs, hands, face, and other places)
- Jumpiness, bad temper, or sudden changes in mood
- Trouble sleeping
- Thin skin that bruises easily
- Acne
- Increase in your blood pressure
- Fragile bones

### What are some things I need to know or do while I take this medicine?

Tell your doctor about all medicines you use. This includes prescriptions, medicines you buy off the shelf at the store, vitamins, and herbal products. Do not start a new medicine without telling your doctor.

- It is important to know that many medicines do not mix well with alcohol.
- Talk to your doctor before getting any shots. Some shots can be harmful for you while you are taking this medicine.
- Do not use this medicine if you are pregnant or thinking of getting pregnant. It could harm the unborn baby. Talk with your doctors before getting pregnant.



Keep this and all other medicines out of the reach of children. Never share your medicines with others. Use this medicine only for the reason your doctor said to.

### What follow-up do I need?

You will have regular blood work. It is important to have the blood work done. This is how your doctor checks for side effects from the medicine.

### What's the doctor's phone number? (585) 486-0901