

# Taking prednisolone steroid tablets for eye (ocular) inflammation

Department of Ophthalmology

Information for Patients

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## What is prednisolone?

Prednisolone is a type of corticosteroid tablet. This is a steroid. We use it to reduce inflammation in lots of conditions.

Steroids are good at reducing inflammation. But they do not fix the cause of the inflammation.

## Why have I been given this?

We have prescribed you with prednisolone to help reduce inflammation in your eye. It works rapidly and can manage symptoms over a longer period of time. It may also ease irritation and pain in the eye.

## When do I take it?

You will usually need to take it once a day. You should take the dose in the morning, with food or just after eating food.

## What dose do I take?

Your doctor will advise you about the dose. Your dose will depend on a number of factors. It depends on why prednisolone is being used and your body weight. Your doctor may start you on a high dose and then lower this over a number of weeks as your symptoms improve.

If you have been taking steroids over a long time your doctor will reduce the dose very slowly.

**Health information and support is available at [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)  
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

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To give feedback about this information sheet, contact [uhl-tr.informationforpatientsmailbox@nhs.net](mailto:uhl-tr.informationforpatientsmailbox@nhs.net)

**You should not stop taking your steroid tablets or change the dose unless advised by your doctor.**

**It can be dangerous to stop steroids suddenly.**

## **How long will it take to work?**

This steroid works quickly. You will often notice a change within a few days.

## **Are there any side effects?**

**Possible side effects in the eye are:**

- Greater risk of cataract
- Greater risk of raised eye pressure

**The most common bodily (systemic) side effects in other areas are:**

- Weight gain
- Rise in blood sugar (increased risk of diabetes)
- Thinning of the bones (osteoporosis)
- Stomach (gastric) ulcer
- Indigestion, stomach pains
- Changes in mood
- Sleep disturbance
- Bruising easily
- Muscle weakness
- Stretch marks and thinning of the skin

## **Is there anything I should look out for?**

Prednisolone can make you more likely to get infections. If this happens or if you have a fever you should see your doctor (GP or eye specialist). If you feel unwell or get any new symptoms after starting prednisolone, you must tell your doctor.

If you have not had chicken-pox but come into contact with someone who has chicken-pox or shingles, you should see your doctor right away. You may need special treatment. If you get chicken-pox or shingles you should see your doctor right away.

You should have regular blood tests to monitor full blood count, blood sugar levels and liver function test with your doctor (GP). This is so we can monitor the results if you are on long term steroids.

## Reducing the risk of osteoporosis

Osteoporosis means thinning of the bones. This can cause fractures to happen. Follow the advice below to reduce the risk of getting a fracture. You should also ask your GP or specialist for personalised advice.

- Make sure you take calcium supplements (usually prescribed by hospital doctor). Vitamin D supplements may also help.
- If you can then do at least 30 minutes of weight-bearing exercise (walking or running) daily.
- Avoid smoking and reduce the amount of alcohol you drink.

## Can I take other medicines along with steroid tablets?

Many medications can be safely taken with Prednisolone. There are some medications that can interact with steroids. Please tell your doctor you are currently taking steroids before being prescribed any new medication.

Please talk to your doctor or pharmacist before buying and taking any over-the-counter medicines.

## Can I have immunisation injections while taking prednisolone?

Do not take a immunisation injections that has any of the live vaccines such as polio, rubella (german measles) and yellow fever.

You can take flu vaccines like COVID vaccines and pneumovax (a vaccination against a common bug which can cause pneumonia and other serious infections). Your doctor or pharmacist can give you more advice about this.

## Do steroid tablets affect pregnancy?

If you are planning a family you should speak with your doctor about this. If you find you are pregnant and are taking steroids, do not stop taking the steroids. You must still speak with your GP or doctor at the earliest point. If you are breastfeeding while taking steroids, please talk with your doctor.

## Can I drink alcohol while taking steroid tablets?

Alcohol and steroids can upset the stomach. It is best for you to avoid drinking alcohol. Or reduce how much alcohol you drink while on steroids.

## Carrying a steroid alert card

**You must carry a steroid alert card** if you are taking:

- Prednisolone at a dose of 5mg or more, or equal to it (ask your doctor) for 4 or more weeks in any form.
- Or prednisolone dose of 40mg, or equal to it for 7 days or more.

This is required by NHS England. It means other health care staff know you are taking steroid medication should you need emergency treatment. If you do not have one, the alert card is available from pharmacies or ask your doctor.

## Who should I contact if I have any concerns?

If you think you may have problems with your eyes contact the Eye casualty Department on 0116 258 6273 or go to the Eye casualty located in the Windsor EyeClinic, Level 1 Windsor, Leicester Royal Infirmary.

Opening times: Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 4.30pm

Saturday and Sunday, 8.30am to 12.30pm

If your problem happens outside of these hours and you feel it is urgent, please go to the main Adult Emergency Department at Leicester Royal Infirmary.

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔  
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Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

If you would like this information in another language or format such as EasyRead or Braille, please telephone 0116 250 2959 or email [uhl-tr.equalitymailbox@nhs.net](mailto:uhl-tr.equalitymailbox@nhs.net)



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