





PREDNISONE, PREDNISOLONE, METHYLPREDNISOLONE

- Also known as steroid or corticosteroids
- This medication is available as tablet, oral liquid or as an intravenous injection.

What does the medication look like?

There are several brands for this medication and you may not see yours shown exactly below. Please check with your transplant pharmacists if you have any questions.

Prednisone 1 mg tablet	Prednisone oral suspension or	Methylprednisolone – IV
Prednisone 5 mg tablet 		
Prednisone 50 mg tablet 		

What is this medication for?

Prednisone, prednisolone and methylprednisolone are also referred to as corticosteroids or “steroids”. These “steroids” are different from the type used by some athletes. They are used for their anti-inflammatory and immunosuppressive effects. They lower your immune system and prevent rejection. They can also treat mild acute rejection when given in high doses.

How should I take this medication?

It is important to take your medications at the same time each day in order to keep a steady amount (drug level) in your body.

Take this medication ONCE a day (for example 9 AM)	Your medication time: _____
Taper instructions:	

- Prednisone and prednisolone should be taken **with food** to decrease stomach upset.
- If you take prednisone and prednisolone just once a day, take your dose in the morning with breakfast. This mimics your body’s natural rhythm of steroid production.
- You may be started on high doses of prednisone, prednisolone or methylprednisolone in cases of acute rejection. The dose will be decreased gradually to the smallest effective dose, and you may need to continue this dose ongoing.
- In case you need to go for a procedure or an operation that requires you to not eat anything before (fasting), you **must** still take your transplant medications with a sip of water at your regular time.

Missed Dose or Vomited Dose:

If you miss a dose take your medication as soon as you remember and then take your next dose at the regularly scheduled time. If you are more than half way to your next dose, skip the missed dose and continue with your regular schedule. Do not double or take extra doses.

If you missed more than 1 day of anti-rejection medications, contact your transplant team immediately for further instructions.

If you vomit within 30 minutes of taking the dose or if you see some of the medication come up, then repeat the dose. Otherwise, just continue on with your next scheduled dosing time.

What are some possible side effects of this medication?

Side Effect	Management
<i>Heartburn or nausea, stomach ulcers</i>	Take prednisone and prednisolone with food or milk. Your doctor may put you on a medication to protect your stomach (ranitidine (Zantac®) or pantoprazole (Tecta®)).
<i>Swelling or high blood pressure</i>	Avoid salty foods, elevate your feet when sitting, check your blood pressure regularly.
<i>High blood sugar</i>	Blood sugar will be monitored and treatment may be required for high blood sugars. Report any numbness or tingling in your hands or feet, increased thirst, dry mouth, fruity odour on your breath, or increased urinary frequency to your doctor. If you are a diabetic, make sure you monitor your sugars regularly and take your diabetic medications as prescribed.
<i>Increased appetite / weight gain</i>	Eat healthy, well-balanced meals, eat foods that are lower in fat and avoid high calorie snacks like chips, chocolate bars and sugared drinks. Ask the dietitian to help you with an eating plan.
<i>Bone loss (osteoporosis) can occur with long-term use</i>	Taking calcium, vitamin D can help prevent osteoporosis.
<i>Changes in behaviour including trouble sleeping, decreased mood, nightmares, nervousness</i>	Other medications can be used to help with these symptoms if they are very bothersome. Contact your doctor or transplant team if these become an issue
<i>Vision changes, cataracts, glaucoma</i>	It is important to have regular eye examinations.
<i>Changes in appearance (rounder face, more fat deposits around waist and the back of the neck, stretch marks, acne on face, back and chest)</i>	These symptoms usually appear if you take high doses for a prolonged period of time. These changes do not last long and will start to improve after your steroid dose is reduced.
<i>Slower wound healing</i>	Inform your transplant doctor if this becomes an issue.