



London Health Sciences Centre

Multi-Organ Transplant Program

University Hospital
Patient Medication Information
Pharmacy Services 519-663-3172

Common Name: prednisone

What is it?

Prednisone is a corticosteroid hormone. Your body produces a form of prednisone called cortisol, which helps your body respond to stress, such as infection. When you take prednisone tablets to prevent rejection, your body produces less cortisol and relies on you to take prednisone tablets regularly. If you stop taking prednisone suddenly, your body cannot produce cortisol quickly enough and you may become ill. Your transplant team will decrease your prednisone dose gradually (taper) to allow your body to adjust. Although prednisone is used to prevent rejection in transplant recipients, it also has many other uses such as treating arthritis, asthma, allergies, and inflammation.

How should it be taken?

Prednisone is taken once daily, usually in the morning. It should be taken with food or milk to prevent stomach irritation. Your doctor will tell you when to reduce your dose. **DO NOT STOP TAKING PREDNISONE SUDDENLY.** If you forget a dose, take it as soon as you remember. If it is time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and carry on as usual. Do not double your dose.

In some people, prednisone may be tapered down to every second day. You may wish to keep a calendar to remind you what days to take your prednisone.

What side effects may occur? What can I do about them?

Prednisone has many side effects, particularly with long-term use. Your transplant team is aware of these side effects and will try to decrease your dose as much as possible without causing rejection.

If you experience nausea, vomiting, stomach irritation, or heartburn, take this medication with food or milk. If these effects persist or your stools become black and tarry, contact your doctor.

Mood swings may occur at high doses. Acne, round face, thin skin, easy bruising, slow wound healing, headache, insomnia, weight gain, swollen feet, muscle weakness, blurred vision, cataracts, weak bones, increase appetite and thirst may also occur.

If you are diabetic, prednisone may make it more difficult to control your blood sugar and require you to use more insulin. If you are not diabetic, prednisone may require you to temporarily or permanently take insulin or pills to control your blood sugar levels.

Are there any other special precautions to take?

Be sure to tell any doctor, dentist, surgeon, nurse, or pharmacist who is involved with your health care that you are taking prednisone.