



ADVANCED SINUS AND ALLERGY CENTER

1030 W. Higgins #325
Park Ridge, IL 60068

Systemic Steroids

Prednisone or Methylprednisolone

Prednisone or methylprednisolone (Medrol®) are medications that decrease inflammation (swelling) in your body. They are commonly used in asthma and Chronic Rhinosinusitis (CRS), particularly when nasal polyps are present. In addition to reducing inflammation, steroids may have some antimicrobial properties. This means that they can kill some viruses, bacteria and fungi (mold).

Our adrenal glands produce steroids that circulate in our blood (cortisol). When oral steroids are given, the adrenal glands “fall asleep” and make less cortisol. If you abruptly stop taking the prescribed steroids, your adrenal glands may not have enough time to wake up and resume normal production of cortisol. This is why your doctor will taper off the amount of prescribed steroid over a few days.

Although they can be really helpful in treating disease, steroids also have some bothersome side effects when taken by mouth or given intramuscularly/intravenously.

Common side effects:

1. Increased appetite
2. Fluid retention
3. Hyperactivity
4. Indigestion or heartburn

Adverse Effects

1. Cataract formation
2. Glaucoma
3. High-blood pressure
4. High blood sugar (as with diabetes)
5. Mood swings
6. Acid reflux or ulcer disease
7. Bone-thinning (osteoporosis)
8. Irregular menstrual cycle

A serious but very rare adverse reaction to oral steroids called avascular necrosis can occur. This refers to a condition where the blood supply to the joint decreases and the bone disintegrates. Inform your doctor if you develop significant joint pain, particularly in the hips, while taking oral steroids.

If you have had a duodenal ulcer, you should inform your doctor and he/she will prescribe some medication to protect your stomach.



ADVANCED SINUS
AND
ALLERGY CENTER

1030 W. Higgins #325
Park Ridge, IL 60068

Steroids are typically avoided if you:

1. Are pregnant or planning to become pregnant
2. Have a bleeding abnormality
3. Have or have had tuberculosis (TB)
4. Have glaucoma
5. Have depression
6. Have an immune deficiency
7. Have had avascular necrosis of a joint
8. Have poorly controlled blood pressure or diabetes
9. Have glaucoma or cataracts
10. Have severe osteoporosis

If you require frequent or continuous steroids and you are at risk for glaucoma or cataract formation you should undergo annual eye exams by an Ophthalmologist (eye doctor). If you have a history of osteopenia or osteoporosis, you should perform weight-bearing exercises daily and undergo an annual bone density scan. If you have diabetes, you should monitor your blood glucose (sugar) levels every day while you are on steroids and talk to your primary care doctor or endocrinologist if your blood glucose readings are elevated.

Take the following precautions when you take steroids:

1. Take all the steroid pills together on a full stomach after breakfast in the morning. This will help minimize the side effects of stomach irritation and insomnia.
2. Do not keep this medicine in the bathroom because of the heat and moisture.
3. Eat a banana a day while on steroids to help replace potassium.
4. Monitor your blood pressure and/or glucose levels carefully if you have high blood pressure or diabetes.
5. Supplement your diet with Calcium 1200 mg/d and Vitamin D 800 IU/day. Calcium citrate is preferred to calcium carbonate to reduce unwanted side effects (like GI upset or kidney stones).
6. Avoid strenuous activity if you have been simultaneously prescribed a quinolone antibiotic like Ciprofloxacin or Levaquin as there is a small increased risk of tendonitis and Achilles tendon rupture. Tell your doctor right away if you develop any muscle or joint pain.