

PREDNISOLONE

(Predsolone, Panafcortelone, Solone)

What is prednisolone?

Prednisolone is a type of drug called a corticosteroid. Corticosteroids have the same action as a natural hormone found in the body called cortisol. It works by reducing inflammation in the body. Prednisolone is used to treat many conditions that cause inflammation, including inflammatory bowel disease (IBD).

Prednisolone is generally prescribed for a short period to help control symptoms of an IBD flare or when the disease has been difficult to control with other medical therapies.

How do I take it?

Prednisolone tablets should be swallowed whole with a glass of water with or immediately after food.

What dose should I take?

Your gastroenterologist will prescribe a course of treatment for you depending on your weight and severity of symptoms. You may be required to take prednisolone for several weeks while gradually reducing the dose.

What if I forget a dose?

It is very important that you DO NOT miss any doses of prednisolone. If you are taking prednisolone ONCE a day and you forget a dose, take it as soon as you remember. If your next dose is due within 12 hours, skip the dose. Take the next day's dose as usual.

If you are taking prednisolone MORE THAN ONCE a day and forget a dose, take it as soon as you remember. If your next dose is due within 2 hours, skip the dose. Take the next dose as usual.

Can I take other medications?

Prednisolone can be taken with other medicines but is important you tell your doctor about any other medicines you are taking. This includes over-the-counter medicines, patches, eye drops, and herbal or alternative therapies.

If you are planning to have any vaccinations while taking prednisolone you should discuss this with your gastroenterologist, GP or IBD nurse. If you have been taking more than 60mg of prednisolone for longer than a week, you should not have any "live" vaccines until 1 month after you stop treatment with prednisolone.

Routine monitoring and follow up

When taking prednisolone you may need regular blood tests and follow up appointments with your gastroenterologist. If you become unwell or your bloods tests are abnormal, you may require more frequent monitoring or have your dose of prednisolone changed.

If you have been taking prednisolone for a long time, you may find it difficult to come off the drug entirely without symptoms of an IBD flare occurring. This is called steroid dependence. You should not stop taking prednisolone suddenly. It is best to gradually reduce your dose of prednisolone each week. This should be done with guidance from your gastroenterologist or GP.

What are the side effects?

Prednisolone is well tolerated by most people and can start to work very quickly. Side effects can be dependent on the dose and duration of treatment. Short courses of treatment often have fewer side effects than long term use. A Severe allergic reaction is a very rare side effect of prednisolone.

<i>Common side effects:</i>		
• indigestion	• poor sleep	• puffy face
• nausea	• fluid retention	• weight gain
• mood changes	• high blood pressure	• high blood sugar
• acne	• delayed wound healing	• increased risk of infection
<i>Side effects associated with long term use:</i>		
• osteoporosis	• moon face	• growth retardation in children
• increased facial hair	• adrenal gland suppression	

Pregnancy and prednisolone

Prednisolone is generally considered safe in pregnancy. If you are pregnant or planning a pregnancy, please inform your doctor so they can discuss treatment options with you.

What do I do if I feel unwell?

Prednisolone at high doses can lower your immune system making you more prone to infections. If you develop a chest infection, you should visit your GP who may prescribe a course of antibiotics to help you recover more quickly.

It is important to report the any symptoms to your gastroenterologist, GP or IBD nurse if you start to feel unwell. You may require a check-up with your doctor or have your prednisolone dose adjusted.

Who do I contact for help?

You can contact the IBD Helpline on (03) 9288 3592 during business hours. Private patients can contact their gastroenterologist's private rooms directly.

For urgent matters outside of business hours, contact the St Vincent's Hospital Switchboard on (03) 9288 2211. Ask to speak with the gastroenterologist on call. In an emergency you should go to your local Emergency Department or call an ambulance (dial 000).