

Taking Steroids: What to Expect

What are corticosteroids?

Corticosteroids can lower inflammation (pain, irritation, swelling) anywhere in your body. Corticosteroids are often just called “steroids.” If you need steroids, you will have to take them every day until your inflammation gets better. Some commonly used steroids are prednisone, cortisone, and methylprednisolone.

How should I take steroids?

Follow the exact schedule and instructions for your steroid treatment. Take your steroids at the same time every day. Your dose will get smaller over time until you are done. You cannot skip doses, change the dose or schedule, or stop taking them all the sudden.

What should I do if I miss a dose of steroids?

If you miss a dose, take it as soon as you remember. If it is almost time for your next dose, skip the missed dose. **Never** take two doses at the same time to make up for a missed dose.

What are the possible side effects of taking steroids?

Physical side effects

- Increased hunger
- Weight gain
- Feeling sick to your stomach (nausea)
- Acne and skin changes
- Having trouble sleeping
- Having a weakened immune system (immunosuppression)
- High blood sugar (this is usually short-term, but you may need treatment)
- If you have a seizure disorder, steroids can make it worse
- Acid reflux, ulcers, or bleeding from your stomach or small intestine
- Increased blood pressure
- Nerve damage to your eyes (glaucoma) or cloudy vision (cataracts)
- Higher risk of infection

Mental side effects

- Mood changes and mood swings (feeling irritable, angry, or very anxious and excited)
- Mental health problems (feeling depressed or anxious, thinking about suicide)

You will need extra monitoring while you're on steroids if you have:

- Diabetes or pre-diabetes
- High blood pressure
- Glaucoma
- Mental health or mood disorders

Call Innovative Hematology/IHTC if:

- Your side effects make it hard to do your normal daily activities
- You are having mental health problems

Always keep our phone number with you. Someone is always on call, so you will be able to reach someone day or night. Please call with any questions or concerns.

317.871.0000 or 877-256-8837



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