



Prednisone™

Information for Interstitial Lung Disease Clinic Patients

UHN

What is the name of the medicine my doctor has prescribed?

Prednisone (pred-ni-zone) is known by many other names.

Why is this medication being recommended for me?

Prednisone is in a class of drugs called “immunosuppressants.”

Prednisone affects your body’s immune system and reduces the amount of inflammation or active damage in your lungs. Inflammation happens before fibrosis (scarring) in the lungs.

By reducing inflammation, it is hoped that prednisone will prevent the progression of lung fibrosis and allow the inflamed lung to return to normal. Unfortunately, Prednisone is probably not very effective at reversing any fibrosis (scarring) already in the lung.

What special precautions should I follow when on Prednisone?

Before taking Prednisone:

- Tell your doctor and pharmacist if you are allergic to Prednisone, any other medications, or any of the inactive ingredients in Prednisone tablets or solutions. Ask your doctor or pharmacist for a list of the inactive ingredients.
- Tell your doctor and pharmacist what prescription and non-prescription medications, vitamins, herbal medications, and nutritional supplements you are taking, or plan to take. Your doctor may need to change the doses of your medications or watch you carefully for side effects.
- Tell your doctor if you have diabetes; glaucoma; an eye infection now, or have ever had eye infections that come and go; high blood pressure; emotional problems; mental illness; myasthenia gravis (a condition in which the muscles become weak); osteoporosis (condition in which the bones become weak and fragile and can break easily); seizures; tuberculosis (TB); ulcers; or liver, kidney, intestinal, heart, or thyroid disease.

Please visit the UHN Patient Education website for more health information:

www.uhnpatienteducation.ca

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- Tell your doctor if you are pregnant, breast-feeding or plan to become pregnant. If you become pregnant while on Prednisone, call your doctor.
- If you are having surgery, including dental surgery, or need emergency medical treatment, tell the doctor, dentist, or medical staff that you are taking, or have recently stopped taking Prednisone. You should carry a card or wear a bracelet with this information in case you are unable to speak in a medical emergency.
- You should know that Prednisone may decrease your ability to fight infection and may prevent you from developing symptoms if you get an infection.
 - Stay away from people who are sick and wash your hands often while you are taking this medication. Be sure to avoid people who have chicken pox or measles. Call your doctor **right away** if you think you may have been around someone who had chicken pox or measles.

What side effects can this medication cause?

Prednisone may cause side effects. Tell your doctor if you have any of these symptoms, if they are severe or do not go away:

- headache or dizziness
- difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep
- inappropriate happiness or sadness, extreme changes in mood or personality
- acne
- thin, fragile skin
- red or purple blotches or lines under the skin
- slowed healing of cuts and bruises
- increased hair growth
- weight gain and changes in the way fat is spread around the body (rounding of the face)
- extreme tiredness or weak muscles
- irregular or absent menstrual periods
- decreased sexual desire
- heartburn, nausea, upset stomach or vomiting
- increased sweating

Some side effects can be serious. If you have any of these symptoms, call your doctor **right away**:

- vision problems
- eye pain, redness, or tearing
- sore throat, fever, chills, cough, or other signs of infection
- seizures
- depression, confusion or loss of contact with reality

- shaking of the hands that you cannot control
- numbness, burning, or tingling in the face, arms, legs, feet, or hands
- irregular heartbeat
- shortness of breath, especially during the night
- worsening dry, hacking cough
- swelling of the eyes, face, lips, tongue, throat, arms, hands, feet, ankles, or lower legs
- difficulty breathing or swallowing
- rash, hives or itching

Prednisone increases the risk of “osteoporosis” (thinning and weakening of the bones).

- Talk to your doctor about the risks of taking Prednisone and, about things that you can do to decrease the chance that you may develop osteoporosis.

Prednisone may cause other side effects (glaucoma, cataracts, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, high blood sugar or diabetes, muscle weakness, and rarely, severe irreversible damage to joints may occur).

- Call your doctor if you have any unusual problems while you are taking this medication.

What monitoring will I need?

Your doctor will order regular blood tests to check your response to Prednisone and monitor for side effects. You will need to have your blood sugar checked regularly. Your doctor may order additional tests depending on the results.

Changing your dose of Prednisone

If you are taking Prednisone for more than 2 weeks, it can be very dangerous to stop this medication suddenly. Speak to your doctor before making any changes to your Prednisone dose.

Who can I call if I have question or concerns about Prednisone?

Please talk to your doctor or pharmacist if you have any questions or concerns about this medication.

This site does not provide medical advice.

These sheets are developed by the UHN Pharmacy Department. They are provided for informational purposes only. These sheets are meant to supplement a discussion with the pharmacist. Please contact a pharmacist or other health care professionals if you have any further questions regarding this medication.