

## Renal Services

# Prednisolone (for vasculitis)

### About your medicine

Prednisolone is a steroid tablet. It is not the same type of steroid tablet that body builders take.

### What is it used for?

This is a drug which can control vasculitis and lupus. It is also used in other diseases such as asthma and arthritis.

### How does it work?

Prednisolone is used to dampen down the body's natural defences and reduce the effects of vasculitis. Whilst you are taking prednisolone you are more likely to become ill due to an infection, especially during periods of stress. It is advisable to report any infection to your doctor.

### How do I take it?

Prednisolone is available as 1mg tablets and 5mg tablets. You should take it once daily usually in the morning. It should also be taken with food to help prevent side effects.

Take the tablets exactly as your doctor explained to you. Your doctor will tell you when to reduce the dose and when to stop altogether. If you forget to take a dose, take it as soon as you remember, unless it is nearly time to take the next dose, and then go on as before.



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### Storing your medicine

Store all your tablets in their original containers, in a cool dry place out of the reach of children. You should only remove tablets from the box when it is time to take them.

### Are there any side effects?

Like most medicines, prednisolone can cause side-effects in some people:

- You may have upset stomach with heartburn and indigestion.
- Your appetite may increase, and you may gain weight.
- You may develop facial flushing or stretch marks may appear on your body.
- You may experience mood swings or temper tantrums.
- Prednisolone can cause an increase in your blood sugar levels:
  - If you are diabetic, you may find your insulin or tablet regime will need to change.
  - Rarely, even if not previously known as diabetic, some people may need treatment with tablets (or insulin) to control their blood sugar once starting Prednisolone.
- If you take prednisolone for a long time, your bones may become thinner, and you may develop cataracts. Your skin may also become thinner with a tendency to easily bruise
- Your blood pressure might rise and will be monitored.
- Muscle wasting and weakness and rarely tendon ligament damage are possible.
- Damage to hip joints is also possible.

If you suffer from any of these, or other undesirable effects, report them to your doctor. **Do not** stop taking the tablets. Your doctor will have chosen this treatment for you bearing in mind the above risks.

### Is there anything else I need to know?

You should **not** be vaccinated with some vaccines, particularly live vaccines whilst receiving prednisolone. For vaccines you can and cannot have, see the vaccination information sheet. Try to avoid close contact with anyone who has an infectious disease. If you or anyone in your family or

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close friends catches **chickenpox or develops shingles**, it is important to tell your doctor **immediately** but **do not stop** taking your Prednisolone. It is also important that you contact your doctor if you catch chickenpox within three months of stopping prednisolone.

You should make sure that the prednisolone tablets you are prescribed are white uncoated tablets, as these are absorbed more quickly into the blood stream. Please try to avoid the red “enteric coated” tablets unless your doctor tells you otherwise.

**You will be given a blue steroid card which you should always carry with you.**

**You should not stop having steroid treatment without first talking to your doctor.**

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format, please contact the department on 024 7696 7777 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy.

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