

Respiratory

Maintenance steroids and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)

Steroids dampen the immune system and reduce inflammation.

Maintenance steroids are sometimes used in COPD to reduce respiratory symptoms and control serious attacks.

Before you take maintenance steroids

Do not take steroids if you are allergic to them or any of the ingredients in them. You will find a list of the ingredients in the information leaflet provided with the medicine.

Which steroid will you be prescribed

The most common steroid prescribed for patients with COPD is prednisolone. Prednisolone is a type of medicine known as a corticosteroid or steroid.

Dose

Patients are usually started on 10mg of prednisolone once a day. This is prescribed with an aim to reduce this to the lowest possible dose whilst keeping the desired effect.

Side effects

You may experience:

- stomach irritation
- weight gain



Patient Information

- mood changes
- muscle weakness
- increased risk of bruising

Risks associated with maintenance steroids

- High blood pressure
- High blood sugars
- Higher risk of infection

When to take prednisolone

Prednisolone should be taken in the morning. This helps reduce side effects and is less likely to affect your sleep.

If you forget to take prednisolone

Take your steroids as prescribed. Do not to make any changes to the regime without consulting your GP or consultant.

If you forget to take a dose you can take it later in the day. Do not take a double dose.

If you need to take the steroids in your rescue pack

Stop your maintenance dose of prednisolone. Take the steroids as prescribed in your rescue pack.

On finishing your rescue pack, restart your maintenance dose of prednisolone as prescribed.

Precautions while being treated with steroids

You' will be given a steroid card with details of the

- prescribed medicine
- the dosage
- length of treatment.

This should always be carried with you.

Patient Information

We will provide you with a leaflet titled “Sick day rules for patients on steroid treatment at risk of adrenal insufficiency / adrenal crisis.”

Taking prednisolone with other medicines

Before you take a new medicine, check with your GP or pharmacist whether there could be an interaction with steroids.

This applies to any over-the-counter medicines and any herbal, complementary or alternative medicines and treatments.

Some key medicines that interact with steroids include

- anticoagulants (such as warfarin)
- medicines for blood pressure
- antiepileptic medicines
- diabetic medicines
- antifungal medicines
- diuretics (water tablets)

Gastric ulcers

Taking steroids with aspirin and NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs) increases the risks of gastric ulcers. If you need both medicines, you may benefit from taking a medicine called a proton pump inhibitors (PPI) to prevent gastric ulcers.

When to seek medical help

Patients taking steroids can, on rare occasions, need urgent medical attention.

Contact your GP if you:

- are vomiting
- have diarrhoea
- are unable to take your tablets
- have missed a dose

Patient Information

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this Information in another language or format, please contact 024 76964167 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smokefree policy.

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