

Renal Services

Prednisolone: Information for kidney transplant patients

What is it used for?

Prednisolone is a steroid that can be used as an immunosuppressant drug to help prevent rejection of your transplanted kidney

How does it work?

It works by stopping the body's production of cells that make up part of your immune system. This dampens down your immune system to stop rejection of your new kidney.

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. You will normally start taking 20mg once daily. This will be gradually decreased in clinic to a lower dose over a few weeks.

Are there any side effects?

- 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



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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.

Is there anything else I need to know?

Taking immunosuppressant medicines may mean you experience some long term effects on your health that you need to be aware of. These include an increased risk of infection and an increased risk of cancer. You should follow all the general health advice given to you by the transplant team. Please read the booklet they give you carefully, as this will provide you with more information.

You should not be vaccinated with certain ‘live’ vaccines whilst you are on prednisolone. The transplant team or pharmacist will be able to advise you on vaccines that are ok for you to have.

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 transplant 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.
- You should avoid contact with anyone who has an infectious disease.
- If you have never had chickenpox you should avoid close contact with people who have chickenpox or shingles. If you do come into contact with chickenpox see your doctor urgently.

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

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Document History	
Department:	Renal transplantation
Contact:	26785
Updated:	September 2020
Review:	September 2022
Version:	4.1
Reference:	HIC/LFT/1535/12