



## **Prednisone**

Prednisone is a corticosteroid medication used to reduce swelling and inflammation. Take the medication exactly as prescribed. Try to take the medication between 6 and 8 AM. In the early morning hours, the body secretes a natural steroid similar to Prednisone called cortisol. If Prednisone is taken in the morning, at the time the body secretes cortisol, side effects can be reduced. Take the medication after meals. Like aspirin, the medication can be irritating to an empty stomach. Taking the medication after eating can reduce irritation to the stomach. Avoid excessive consumption of stimulant-like substances, such as caffeine in coffee or soda, or decongestant medications. Prednisone can often increase the body's energy level. In some patients this effect is welcome, however, in others the increased energy level can lead to a jittery or nervous feeling. If excessive stimulant-like substances are also ingested, irritability, restlessness, and/or sleeping difficulty can occur. Discontinue the medication if you experience racing or bizarre thoughts. The vast majority of patients taking Prednisone do not suffer significant side effects and tolerate the medication well.

Short courses of prednisone can alter blood sugar levels. Diabetics who check their blood sugar will notice that control of glucose levels is very difficult on steroid medications. If you have diabetes and this was not discussed, please let the office know.

Long term side effects of Prednisone can be severe. These can include diabetes, weight gain, body shape changes, osteoporosis or joint problems, decreased immunity to infections, cataracts, and glaucoma. These risks are typically time dependent, and short courses of steroid medications are unlikely to cause them. Because cumulative short doses can cause problems, frequent use is avoided.