

Prednisone side effects

Your doctor may have prescribed a corticosteroid (prednisone) to help your ear problem. Steroids can affect many parts of the body and there are side effects and precautions you should be aware of before you start the medication. Side effects are uncommon when taken for a short period of time (<1 month).

If you have any of the following medical conditions, you should let your doctor know: diabetes, severe high blood pressure, psychiatric illness, stomach ulcer, or history of tuberculosis.

1. Adhere to the dosage that your doctor has advised. Do not stop the steroid medication without discussing with your doctor.
2. Stomach ulcers can occur as a result of steroid therapy. We recommend taking antacids (famotidine, ranitidine, TUMS) that can be purchased over the counter while on steroid therapy. Maalox, also available over the counter, can also relieve indigestion or heartburn. Avoid aspirin, ibuprofen, alcohol, or nicotine.
3. Steroids can affect your mood, resulting in nervousness, insomnia, or a sense of well-being.
4. Steroids can affect your response to infection or injury. In the event of any surgery, medical emergency, serious infection or injury, tell the doctor/surgeon that you are taking prednisone.
5. Steroids can cause swelling and weight gain due to fluid retention.
6. If you are diabetic, steroids can increase your blood sugar level. If you are insulin-dependent and check your blood sugars regularly, you may need to adjust your insulin dosage to accommodate your elevated blood sugars.
7. Steroids can increase your blood pressure. If you have a history of severe high blood pressure, you may need to consult with your primary care doctor to ensure your blood pressure is well-controlled while you are on therapy.

8. A rare complication of steroids includes a bone injury to the femur called aseptic necrosis. If you begin feeling bone and joint pain while on therapy, please let your doctor know.

9. The above side effects are typically mild when taking steroids for a short period (<1 month). Prolonged treatment at high dosages can result in: puffiness of the face, fullness in the back/neck/shoulders, weight gain, increased bone fragility, cataracts, acne, aseptic necrosis of the femur, and increased facial hair.