

## Asthma Medicine: Oral Corticosteroids

The name of your oral corticosteroid is \_\_\_\_\_.

### What are oral corticosteroids?

This is a pill that you swallow and use when your asthma starts to flare-up. Most often they are taken for only a short period of time (5-10 days). They are part of the “Red Zone” plan for care on many written Asthma Action Plans.

### How do they help?

They decrease airway swelling. This opens the airways and makes it easier to breathe.

### What are some examples?

- Prednisone tablets
- Prednisolone
  - Orapred<sup>®</sup>: 15mg/5ml
  - Pediapred<sup>®</sup>: 5mg/5ml
  - Prelone<sup>®</sup>: comes in both strengths as listed above
  - Orapred<sup>®</sup>ODT (dissolvable tablets): 10mg, 15mg, & 30mg
- Methylprednisolone (Medrol<sup>®</sup>)

### Are there side effects?

Side effects may include any or all the symptoms listed below and should improve when you are done taking the medicine.

- Increased appetite
- Changes in mood
- Trouble sleeping
- Stomach ache

If you take this medicine for a long time, other side effects may include:

- Weight gain
- Your bones may become weak (osteoporosis)
- Decrease in growth (height) for a child
- Higher risk for infection
- Eye changes (cataracts)
- Increase in blood pressure
- Increase in blood sugar (diabetes)
- Bruising and skin changes

Please talk with your health care team if you are or plan to take oral corticosteroids for a long time.

### How do I take this medicine?

- Take each dose with food.
- If you take it twice a day, it is best to take it with breakfast and again in the mid-afternoon with a snack.
- If you take it once a day, take it in the morning.
- If you are taking an oral corticosteroid for more than 10 days, do not stop taking it until you talk with your health care team. They may suggest a “taper.” A taper slowly decreases your dose over time until you are scheduled to stop taking it.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person’s health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright ©12/2018. University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#6661.