

# Why is this medication prescribed?

Corticosteroids are similar to a natural hormone produced by the adrenal glands. A corticosteroid may be prescribed for you to reduce inflammation (swelling, heat, redness, and pain). While on this medication, your doctor should monitor your blood sugar, blood pressure and weight. You should also be prescribed medication to protect (coat) your stomach.

## IMPORTANT:

Use of corticosteroids can lead to **hyperglycemia** (an increase in the level of blood sugar). Some signs of hyperglycemia are:

- You feel drowsy
- You feel very tired or lack energy
- You have a dry mouth and feel extremely thirsty
- You need to urinate often

**If you are experiencing any of these symptoms and they persist, tell your doctor.**

## Notes:

---

---

---

---

---

For personalized recommendations, ask to meet with a dietitian.

## References:

Lacong A., Ruel D. & Tessier V. (2000). *Drugs-nutrients : An interaction guide.*

Powers D. & Moore A. (2000). *Food-Medication Interactions*, 11th Ed.

Zeman F.J, (1991). *Clinical Nutrition and Dietetics*, 2nd Ed

InfoNEURO Patient Guides are produced by the Neuro-Patient Resource Centre and Montreal Neurological Hospital staff. This information is for educational purposes only, and is not intended to replace the advice of a professional health care practitioner, or to substitute for medical care.

Prepared by: Carmela Maloney, Reviewed by the dietitians from the Diabetic Task Force.  
©2004



InfoNEURO

## Dietary Guidelines for use of **Corticosteroids** (Decadron, Solu-Cortef, Solu-Medrol, Prednisone)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dietitian: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_



Montreal Neurological Institute and Hospital  
McGill University Health Centre

## Possible side-effects of Corticosteroids

## Recommended changes in your diet to reduce these side effects

### Hyperglycemia:

You may have an increase in your blood sugar

Eat **less** of the foods that are high in concentrated sweets.

**Foods that are high in concentrated sweets:**  
Sugar, maple syrup, icing, carbonated drinks, candies, pastries, cakes, cookies, jams, jellies, gum, sherbet, ice cream, popsicles

You may have swelling and an increase in blood pressure due to fluid and salt retention

Eat **less** of the foods that are high in salt (sodium).

**Foods that are high in salt (sodium):**

Processed meats (ham, bacon, smoked meat); flavoured salts and seasonings with sodium; salted crackers, nuts, chips and pretzels; salted fish; pickles; concentrated chicken and beef broth (Bovril, Oxo); soya sauce; Worcestershire sauce; canned soups and sauces

Do not add salt at the table.

You may have a loss of potassium in your blood

Eat **more** of the foods that are high in potassium

**Foods that are high in potassium:**

Dried fruit in limited amounts, bananas, avocado, oranges and other fresh fruits; potatoes, spinach, artichokes, beet greens, broccoli, brussel sprouts; sardines, scallops and trout; wheat germ, whole grained breads and cereals; cocoa and chocolate (70% cocoa and over)

Your bones may become weak due to a reduction in your body's ability to absorb calcium (Osteoporosis)

Eat **more** of the foods that are high in calcium.

**Foods that are high in calcium:**

Milk, cheese, yogurt; sardines with bones; legumes, nuts and seeds; dark, leafy vegetables like bok choy, collard greens and broccoli; enriched soya drink

You may have a loss of protein from your muscle tissue

Eat **more** of the foods that are high in protein.

**Foods that are high in protein:**

Meat, fish, seafood and poultry; cheese and eggs; legumes; tofu

You may have an increase in your blood cholesterol and triglycerides

Lower the fat and cholesterol in your diet.

✓ Avoid fried foods.

Instead, you should bake, grill or poach.

✓ Trim the fat off meat before cooking.

Try to lower your calories.

✓ Choose leaner cuts of meat.

✓ Eat red meat only three times a week.  
Eat more fish or poultry.

✓ Choose 1 % or skim milk instead of 3.5%

✓ Choose low fat cheese (15% or less m.f.) and yogurt (1% or less m.f.)

✓ Avoid butter, cream and rich sauces.