

DEPARTMENT OF
OPHTHALMOLOGY

Steroid Therapy

ENDOCRINE (HORMONAL)

- Weight gain
- Menstrual irregularities and amenorrhea
- Puffy facies and Hirsutism (increased hair growth)
- Suppression of growth in children

NEUROPSYCHIATRIC

- Sleeplessness
- Depression, euphoria and other psychic derangements

GASTROINTESTINAL

- Nausea, vomiting, bad taste
- Abdominal fullness
- Gastric ulceration with perforation

CARDIOVASCULAR (HEART)

- Sodium and water retention in body
- Hypertension or Hypotension
- Electrolyte imbalance
- Cardiac arrhythmias (disorder of heart rhythm) and heart failure

DERMATOLOGIC (SKIN)

- Acne and delayed wound healing
- Hyper or hypo pigmentation
- This fragile skin

MUSCULOSKELETAL

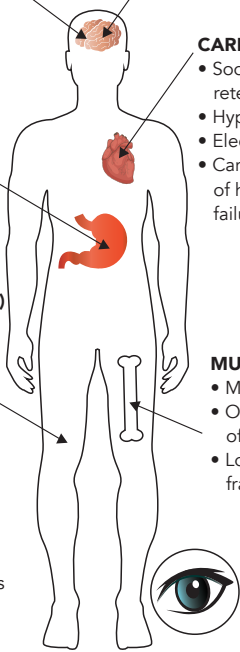
- Muscle weakness
- Osteoporosis Brittleness of bone
- Long bone or vertebral fracture

IMMUNE SYSTEM

- Masking of infections
- Latent infections becoming active
- Opportunistic infections

OPHTHALMIC

- Increased intraocular pressure
- Cataracts etc.



Major side effects of steroid are described diagrammatically.

However, please note that most of these complications listed above are relatively rare but they need to be recognised and treated early.

Remember that your ophthalmologist is prescribing these medications for you after taking into account the benefits and risks of treatment.

Clinic Appointments and Eye Screening

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Disclaimer

This is a general guide. If in doubt, please consult your doctor. Information is subject to revision without notice. The contents of this leaflet are not to be reproduced in any form without the prior permission of NHG Eye Institute.



Why am I prescribed steroids?

- Uveitis is a chronic recurrent inflammation of the eye, which can be definitely controlled, but often cannot be completely cured.
- To control the inflammation, a course of steroids is prescribed to you.

What are the side effects of steroids?

- It can also cause several untoward effects in the different parts of the body.
- You should inform your doctor if you are suffering from or had following while on steroid therapy:
 - Any episode of illnesses or if any existing infections had become worse.
 - Chickenpox.
 - Heart condition.
 - Kidney problems.
 - Liver problems like jaundice, gall stone etc.
 - Gastritis, stomach ulcers.
 - Glaucoma or family history of glaucoma.
 - Diabetes, thyroid problems.
 - Epilepsy (fits).
 - Tuberculosis (TB).
 - Past the menopause (the physiological change of life and suffering from osteoporosis (brittleness of the bones of body).
 - Mental illness (psychoses).
 - Pregnant or trying to become pregnant.
 - Breast feeding.

What if I am taking other concurrent medications?

To inform your doctor about other drugs before you start the steroid treatment: antiepileptic drugs, antiarthritis drugs, analgesics (such as aspirin and ibuprofen) oestrogens, antihypertensives, diuretics, drugs used to treat myasthenia gravis and certain cancers, anticoagulants, anti-diabetic drugs including insulin and vaccines.

DO'S & DONT'S during steroid therapy

- Do take antacid preparation.
- Do ample exercises.
- Do take a low sodium (salt) diet.
- Avoid taking spicy and oily food.
- Do not overlook frequent mood changes or erratic behaviour.
- Do carry a medical identification card or wear a bracelet informing your current medications.
- Do inform your ophthalmologist about any other medication, which you are taking (for drug interactions).
- Do inform your physician about your recent prescription.
- Do not hesitate to call your doctor if you develop a side effect that you think might be related to the use of the steroid.
- If you develop fever or infections while you are on steroid therapy, contact your nearest physician immediately or contact us.

Situations in which steroids should be used with caution

- Diabetes mellitus (monitor blood sugar weekly)
- Infectious disease (take the help of physician immediately)
- Chronic renal failure (meet your nephrologist regularly)
- Congestive heart failure (meet your cardiologist regularly)
- Systemic hypertension (monitor your blood pressure every week)

How to take your medicine

- The tablets should only be taken by mouth and can be swallowed with water.
- They are taken after breakfast.
- Once your condition starts to get better, your doctor may change your dosage to a lower one. Your doctor may also reduce your dosage before stopping treatment completely.
- **WITHDRAWAL SYMPTOMS:** Sudden stopping of treatment can cause the following symptoms: fever, painful muscles and joints, inflammation of the eyes and nasal passages, painful and itchy skin lumps, loss of weight.
- **MISSED DOSE:** Take that tablet as soon as you realise and take the next dose at the correct time.
- **OVERDOSE:** Too many tablets can make you unwell. Contact your doctor or nearest hospital accident and emergency department.

Never stop your tablets without discussing with your doctor.