Prednisone and Prednisolone
(Prelone®, Pediapred®, Deltasone®, Orapred®)

Prednisone (PRED ni sone) and prednisolone (pred NISS uh lone) are medicines known as corticosteroids (core ti co STAIR oids). These medicines are usually called steroids. Other brand names for this medicine are Prelone® (PRE lone), Pediapred® (PEE dee uh pred), and Deltasone® (DEL tuh zone). Prednisolone is the generic name for Orapred® (OR uh pred).

Prednisone and prednisolone are like hormones made by the body. The body may not make enough of its own hormones while your child takes prednisone or prednisolone. Never let your child stop taking prednisone or prednisolone or change the dose without first talking to your child's doctor. As the dose of prednisone or prednisolone is decreased, the body will slowly begin to make more of its own hormones again. Symptoms should go away or get better in a few days or weeks. It depends on what your child is being treated for.

How These Medicines Work

These medicines are used to help reduce inflammation caused by illness or injury. They are generally safe when taken by a doctor's directions.

How to Give These Medicines

- If your child takes prednisone or prednisolone only once a day or once every other day, it is best to give it in the morning with breakfast.
- Use a pediatric measuring device or a measuring spoon to measure the exact dose. These can be bought at the pharmacy (Picture 1). Do not measure liquid medicines in kitchen spoons.
- Read the label carefully and make sure you are giving your child the right dose. It is easy to confuse the many different dosage forms and strengths.

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How to Give These Medicines, continued

- Give the **exact dose** of medicine that your doctor ordered.
- Stay with your child until he or she has swallowed the dose of medicine.
- Wash and dry your hands before and after using the medicine.
- These medicines should be given with food or after meals.
- It is very important to finish **all** the medicine that is ordered for _____ days. Do not stop the medicine early, even if your child is feeling better.

If You Forget to Give a Dose

If you forget to give a dose of this medicine, give it as soon as possible. If it is almost time for the next dose, do not give the missed dose at all. Do not double the next dose. Instead, go back to your regular dosing schedule. If you have any questions about this, check with your child's doctor or pharmacist.

If a Dose Is Vomited

- If your child gags or chokes and spits out the dose **before swallowing it**, let the child calm down and then give the same amount 1 more time.
- Throwing up (vomiting) is a side effect of this medicine. If vomiting happens again with future doses, call your child's doctor.

Medicine Storage

- **Store all medicine out of the reach of children.**
- Always keep medicine in the original bottle from the pharmacy.
- Light and moisture make this medicine not work as well. Keep the bottle tightly closed and store it in a dark, dry place. Do not store it in the bathroom or above the kitchen sink.
- Keep this medicine away from heat or direct sunlight.
- Do not use this medicine after the expiration date printed on the container.
- When the medicine is no longer needed, mix the leftover medicine with an unwanted material, like coffee grounds or kitty litter. Put the mixture into a container or a bag that will not leak. Throw the container away in the trash where children and pets cannot reach it.
Drug – Nutrient Interactions

- Do not give over-the-counter medicines, like acetaminophen, aspirin, antacids or cold medicines, without checking with your child’s doctor or pharmacist first.
- If your child is taking any other medicine or herbal supplements, tell the doctor and pharmacist. Some medicines should not be taken with prednisone/prednisolone or they should be monitored. These include:
  - Aspirin
  - Antacids
  - Warfarin
  - Echinacea
  - Isoniazid
  - Cyclosporine (in transplant patients)
  - Furosemide (Lasix)
  - Certain antibiotics
  - Hydrochlorothiazide
  - Some vaccines (if taking prednisone or prednisolone long-term)
  - Diabetes medicines (Prednisolone and prednisone can make diabetes worse)
- Your child should not drink large amounts of soft drinks, chocolate drinks, tea, or coffee while taking this medicine.
- If you have other questions about prednisone or prednisolone and other medicines your child takes, talk to the doctor, nurse, or pharmacist.

Warnings

If your child is allergic to prednisone or prednisolone, he or she should not take this medicine.

Let your child’s doctor know if he or she has any of the following:

- Tuberculosis (TB)
- High blood pressure
- Kidney problems
- Thyroid problems
- Seizures
- Diabetes

Special Note for Female Patients

- If a patient thinks she might be pregnant, she should tell the doctor before she begins taking this or any medicine.
- This medicine is OK to use if a woman is breastfeeding a baby.
Possible Side Effects

- Nausea, vomiting
- Increased blood pressure
- Acne
- Puffiness of the face
- Increased appetite and weight gain
- Mood changes
- Difficulty sleeping (if the dose is given at night)
- Increased blood sugar, especially in children with diabetes

Possible Side Effects With Long-Term Use

- Increased risk of infection
- Slow growth
- Brittle bones (bones that break easily)
- Stomach ulcers and inflammation
- High blood sugar (glucose)

What to Do About Side Effects

- If a skin rash happens, **stop giving the medicine and call your child's doctor.**
- Most of these side effects should go away after the medicine is stopped.
- For side effects with long-term use, talk to your child's doctor. The doctor can usually prevent or reverse these problems by reducing the dose, having your child take the medicine every other day, or giving other medicines to prevent these effects.
- If you have any questions about side effects, ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

When to Call For Emergency Help

Call for emergency help if your child has any of these signs of an allergic reaction: trouble breathing, swelling of the tongue, or swelling of the hands, feet or ankles.

When to Call the Doctor

Call your child's doctor if any of the following happens:

- If your child has stomach pain that is severe or occurs often
- Any infection other than a cold
- Fever over 100°F axillary (under the arm)
- Dizziness or weakness
- Changes in mood or behavior

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When to Call the Doctor, continued

- Change in vision
- Severe injury or illness
- Vomiting
- Chickenpox or exposure to chickenpox or shingles
- Urinating (peeing) more than usual (a sign of high blood sugar)
- If your child is having any side effects that continue or are very bothersome

Nutrition

- It is important to eat well-balanced meals every day.
- Some people may need extra potassium in their diets. Your child's doctor or dietitian will let you know which foods are high in potassium.
- Your doctor may want your child to limit the amount of salt he or she uses while taking prednisone or prednisolone.

Good to Know

- Ask your pharmacist for 2 labeled bottles if your daycare provider or school nurse will be giving this medicine.
- Ask your nurse for Helping Hand HH-IV-28, *Medications: How to Give By Mouth*, if your child has trouble taking medicine.

Other Advice about the Medicine

- Tell your child's doctor and pharmacist if your child has a strange or allergic reaction to any medicine.
- If you carry medicine in your purse, keep it in its childproof bottle and keep your purse out of the reach of children.
- Bring all your child's medicines with you in the original bottles whenever your child sees a doctor, goes to an emergency room, or is admitted to the hospital. This helps doctors who may not know your child.
- Learn the name, spelling, and dose of this medicine. Also, teach your child if he is old enough. You will need to know this information when you call your doctor or pharmacist.
- **If your child takes too much of this medicine, or if someone else takes this medicine, first call the Central Ohio Poison Center** at 1-800-222-1222 (TTY 614-228-2272). They will tell you what to do.
Other Advice about the Medicine, continued

- Do not stop giving this medicine or change the amount given without first talking with your child's doctor or pharmacist. Your child may not get better if the medicine is stopped too soon.
- The doctor has prescribed this medicine for your child only. Do not give it to anyone else.
- It is important to keep a record of when the medicine is given. You may use a calendar or Helping Hand HH-V-1, *Medication Record.*
- Tell all other doctors or dentists treating your child if prednisone or prednisolone has been taken in the past 6 months. This medicine can stay in the body for several months after you stop taking it.
- Tell your child's teacher, school nurse, coach, babysitter, and others that your child is taking this medicine and what side effects to watch for.
- Your child's school will need a note from you and from the doctor if the medicine is to be given at school by the school nurse.
- Check with your doctor before giving your child any other medicines or immunizations (vaccines) while he or she is taking prednisone or prednisolone.
- If blood tests are done while prednisone is in the child's system, the medicine may change the results of some tests.

Follow-Up Visits

- Your child's next doctor's visit is on (date) ___________ at (time) _________________.
  Be sure to call your doctor if you cannot keep the appointment.
- Write down all your questions as you think of them. Bring this list with you when you see the doctor.

If you have any questions, be sure to ask your child's doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

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