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Prednisone Side Effects

Prednisone is also known as a corticosteroid; it has anti-inflammatory effects and is known to have a rapid onset of action. The side effects of prednisone, are related to the dose and the length of time the patient takes it. It is important to mention that not all patients experience all side-effects listed below:

- **Hirsutism**

Among the possible side effects of prednisone and other forms of corticosteroids is the excessive growth of body hair, known as hirsutism.

- **Weight Gain**

Patients who take prednisone may suffer some degree of weight gain. The amount of weight gain varies from patient to patient and is dependent upon the amount and duration that the drug is taken. The distribution of body fat goes particularly to the face, back of the neck (known as buffalo hump) and abdomen.

- **Glucose Intolerance**

Also known as steroid-induced diabetes. This simply resolves with the decreased use of the medication or when they are discontinued.

- **Hypertension**

Also known as High blood pressure. Usually improves as the dose is reduced.

- **Increased Susceptibility to Infections**

Minor fungal infections in the mouth to life-threatening infections such as pneumonia become an increased risk for patients taking corticosteroids. Based on the duration of the treatment and the amounts taken, the risk of infections can become greater. This risk can be greatly reduced with the use of antibiotics.

- **Bone Thinning (Osteoporosis)**

Even people who are not at risk for osteoporosis may suffer thinning of the bones with the use of Prednisone. There are treatments and preventive measures available for this and all patients on prednisone for prolonged periods of time are candidates for these medicines.

- **Easy Bruising**

Also known as “thin skin” can be suffered by patients taking prednisone. Moderate to high doses can cause for the patient to bruise easily even as a result of slight trauma.

- **Mood Swings/Insomnia**

While taking high doses of steroids, many patients have difficulty sleeping. They also become more irritable than usual and in extreme cases it can cause depression. When the drug is discontinued or reduced the symptoms improve.

- **Avascular Necrosis of Bone**

Patients taking doses of 20 milligrams a day or higher for long periods are predisposed to joint damage, most often this occurs in the hips. The reason for this is unknown but may be due to avascular necrosis and could ultimately lead to joint replacement.

- **Abdominal Striae (stripes)**

Occurs more frequently in patients who take high doses of steroids for long periods of time.

- **Cataracts**

The eye can develop cataracts due to the long-term use of steroids. Cataracts frequently require surgical removal.

- **Acne**

Some patients become predisposed to facial acne, due to high dose use of prednisone. It can also develop on the chest, back and upper extremities. This usually resolves following cessation of the drug and requires no treatment.

When prednisone is taken for extended periods of time, it can suppress the ability of the body to produce natural cortisone causing the adrenal glands to shrink. Slow tapering of the drug minimizes this risk. Steroid withdrawal symptoms such as muscle or joint aching can occur when prednisone is tapered too rapidly or discontinued.

I certify that I have received this document and have read and understood its content. I further consent to the use of and give Dr. _____ permission to utilize these medications in the treatment of my condition.

Patient Signature

Staff