

Prednisolone Prednisone

(pred-niss-oh-lone); (pred-ni-zone)

Category: Glucocorticoid

Other Names for this Medication: Pred, Prednis-Tab®

Common Dosage Forms: Veterinary: Prednisolone: 5 mg & 20 mg oral tablets. **Human:** Prednisolone: 5 mg oral tablets. Prednisone: 1 mg, 2.5 mg, 5 mg, 10 mg, 20 mg, & 50 mg oral tablets; 1 mg/mL, 2 mg/mL, 3 mg/mL, 4 mg/mL, & 5 mg/mL oral syrup.

This information sheet does not contain all available information for this medication. It is to help answer commonly asked questions and help you give the medication safely and effectively to your animal. If you have other questions or need more information about this medication, contact your veterinarian or pharmacist.

Key Information

- ▶ Give oral products with food.
- ▶ Goal is to find the lowest dose possible and use it for the shortest period of time.
- ▶ Many side effects are possible (see below), especially when used long term. Most common ones are: greater appetite, thirst, and need to urinate.
- ▶ In dogs, stomach or intestinal ulcers, perforation, or bleeding can occur. If your animal stops eating, or you notice a high fever, black tarry stools or bloody vomit, contact your veterinarian immediately.
- ▶ Do not stop therapy abruptly without your veterinarian's guidance as serious side effects could occur.

How is this medication useful?

In animals, prednisolone and prednisone can be useful to treat hypoadrenocorticism (Addison's disease) and can be used as an anti-inflammatory drug, immunosuppressive drug, and antineoplastic (anticancer) agent. Dosages vary for all of these uses. For many species, including dogs and humans, the two drugs are interchangeable, but cats and horses absorb prednisolone better than prednisone.

The FDA (U.S. Food & Drug Administration) has approved some prednisolone products for use in dogs, cats, and horses. The FDA allows veterinarians to prescribe products containing this drug in different species or for other conditions in certain situations. For other FDA-approved prednisone and prednisolone products for use in humans, the FDA allows veterinarians to prescribe these products in animals in certain situations. You and your veterinarian can discuss why this drug is the most appropriate choice.

What should I tell my veterinarian to see if this medication can be safely given?

Many things might affect how well this drug will work in your animal. Be sure to discuss the following with your veterinarian so together you can make the best treatment decisions.

- ▶ Other drugs can affect the way this drug works, so be sure to tell your veterinarian and pharmacist what medications (including vitamins, supplements, or herbal therapies) you give your animal, including the amount and time you give each.
- ▶ Tell your veterinarian about any conditions or diseases your animal may have now or has had in the past.
- ▶ If your animal has been treated for the same disease or condition in the past, tell your veterinarian about the treatment and how well it worked or didn't work.
- ▶ If your animal is pregnant or nursing, talk to your veterinarian about the risks of using this drug.

- ▶ Tell your veterinarian and pharmacist about any medication side effects (including allergic reactions, lack of appetite, diarrhea, itching, hair loss) your animal has developed in the past.

When should this medication not be used or be used very carefully?

No drug is 100% safe in all patients, but your veterinarian will discuss with you any specific concerns about using this drug in your animal.

This drug **SHOULD NOT** be used in patients:

- ▶ That are allergic to it.
- ▶ With a systemic fungal infection (unless using it during an Addisonian crisis).
- ▶ That have stomach or intestinal ulcers.
- ▶ With untreated Cushing's disease (too much stress hormone being made in the body).

This drug should be used **WITH CAUTION** in patients:

- ▶ That are receiving other drugs that can cause stomach ulcers, including aspirin or NSAIDs (eg, carprofen, flunixin, meloxicam).
- ▶ That have diabetes.
- ▶ That have cardiovascular or heart disease.
- ▶ That are pregnant.
- ▶ That have a bacterial infection.
- ▶ That are young and growing. These drugs can affect (stunt) growth when used for a long time.

If your animal has any of these conditions or signs, talk to your veterinarian about the potential risks versus benefits.

What are the side effects of this medication?

Side effects that usually are not serious include:

- ▶ Greater appetite, thirst, and need to urinate.
- ▶ Vomiting, Diarrhea.
- ▶ Mild behavioral changes.
- ▶ Panting more than normal (in dogs).

You don't have to be overly concerned if you see any of these unless they are severe, worsen, or continue to be a problem. Contact your veterinarian if this happens.

Side effects that may be serious or indicate a serious problem:

- ▶ Stomach or intestinal ulcers/perforation/bleeding. If your animal stops eating, or you see a high fever, black tarry stools or bloody vomit (coffee ground appearance), contact your veterinarian immediately.
- ▶ After using the drug for several weeks or more: Weight gain, pot belly, skin or coat changes, hair loss, or weakness, any of which may mean the dose is too high. If you see any of these, contact your veterinarian.

- ▶ Excessive thirst and urinations with excessive appetite in the face of weight loss. These signs can be seen commonly with this drug, but may also indicate diabetes.
- ▶ Severe behavioral changes (eg, aggression/threatening actions). Contact your veterinarian immediately if this occurs.
- ▶ Low energy level may indicate an infection. Because prednisone can suppress immune function when used at high dosages, patients are susceptible to infections. Lethargy may be the only sign you see as the typical signs (fever, frequent or painful urination) alerting you of an infection are masked by the medication. If you are concerned about the possibility of infection, contact your veterinarian immediately.

If my animal gets too much of this medication (an overdose), what should I do?

If you witness or suspect an overdose, contact your veterinarian or an animal poison control center for further advice. Animal poison control centers that are open 24 hours a day include: **Pet Poison HELPLINE** (855-764-7661) and **ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center** (888-426-4435); a consultation fee is charged for these services.

How should this medication be given?

For this medication to work, give it exactly as your veterinarian has prescribed. It's a good idea to always check the prescription label to be sure you are giving the drug correctly.

- ▶ Give medication with food. This may help prevent vomiting after a dose and possibly prevent stomach ulcers or bleeding.
- ▶ If given once daily, prednisone or prednisolone is usually given in the morning to dogs and horses, and in the evening to cats, as this will more closely mimic their natural hormone cycles.
- ▶ Your veterinarian may prescribe a tapering (reducing) dose of this medication. More medication is given early in therapy and the dose is slowly reduced over time. If you have any questions on how much or how often to give this medication, consult with your veterinarian or pharmacist.
- ▶ Liquid forms of this medication must be measured carefully. Your veterinarian or pharmacist can help by providing special measuring spoons or syringes.
- ▶ Prednisone and prednisolone can be very bitter. If you have difficulty getting your animal to take the medicine, contact your veterinarian or pharmacist for tips to help with dosing and reducing the stress of medication time.
- ▶ This medication can be given for various lengths of time. Be sure you understand how long the veterinarian wants you to continue giving this medication. Prescription refills may be necessary before the therapy will be complete. Before stopping this medication, talk to your veterinarian, as there may be important reasons to continue its use.
- ▶ It is very important to not stop the drug abruptly if your animal has been on it for a while as serious side effects could occur.

What should I do if I miss giving a dose of this medication?

If you miss a dose, give it when you remember, but if it is close to the time for the next dose, skip the dose you missed and give it at the next scheduled time. After that, return to the regular dosing schedule. Do not double-up or give extra doses.

How should I store this medication?

- ▶ Store this medication in the original prescription bottle or an approved dosage reminder container (ie, pill minder) at room temperature and protected from light.
- ▶ If your veterinarian or pharmacist has made (compounded) a special formulation for your animal, follow the storage recommendations and expiration date for the product.
- ▶ Keep away from children and other animals.

Can handling this medication be hazardous to me, my family, or other pets?

There are no specific precautions required when handling this medication unless you are allergic to it. Wash your hands after handling any medication.

How should I dispose of this medication if I don't use it all?

- ▶ Do not flush this medication down the toilet or wash it down the sink. If a community drug "take-back" program is available, use this option. If there is no take-back program, mix the drug with coffee grounds or cat litter (to make it undesirable to children and animals and unrecognizable to people who might go through your trash), place the mixture in a sealable plastic bag to keep it from leaking out, and throw the bag out with the regular trash.
- ▶ Do not save left over medication for future use or give it to others to use.

What other information is important for this medication?

- ▶ Your veterinarian will need to do laboratory testing and evaluate your animal to properly adjust the dose of this drug if your animal is on it long-term.
- ▶ If your animal has been on high doses of prednisone, prednisolone or other immunosuppressive drugs, vaccinations may not be effective. Talk to your veterinarian about keeping your animal protected while your animal is receiving the drug.
- ▶ If you are seeing a different veterinarian than normal, be sure to tell them your dog is taking this drug. Dogs that require surgery or are stressed from trauma or illness may require additional glucocorticoid drugs. Also, these drugs can affect some laboratory tests.
- ▶ Use of this drug may not be allowed in certain animal competitions. Check rules and regulations before entering your animal in a competition while this medication is being administered.

If you have any other questions or concerns about this medication, contact your veterinarian or pharmacist.