

# Taking prednisolone following kidney transplant

This leaflet aims to answer your questions about taking prednisolone following your kidney transplant. If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you.

## What is prednisolone?

Prednisolone is a steroid. Steroids can be used for many different conditions, including as an antirejection medication. It works by reducing the body's immune system to prevent your body from rejecting your transplanted kidney.

## What does prednisolone look like and how should it be stored?

Prednisolone is available as 5mg and 20mg tablets. They should be stored in their original container at room temperature, out of reach and sight of children.



## How do I take prednisolone?

Prednisolone should be taken once a day, in the morning, with or just after food. It should be taken at the same time each day and it is vital not to miss any doses.

Following a kidney transplant you will be prescribed a dose of 20mg once a day. For some patients this will be stopped after one week. For others it will continue for longer and the dose will be slowly reduced. It is important not to stop taking prednisolone abruptly as this may cause withdrawal symptoms. Your transplant consultant will advise you whether it can be stopped completely.

You may be provided with a steroid emergency card if taking prednisolone. Carry this with you and show this to any healthcare professional treating you. If you are unwell or are planned for surgery contact the hospital as your dose may need to be changed.

<p><b>Steroid Emergency Card (Adult)</b> </p> <p><b>IMPORTANT MEDICAL INFORMATION FOR HEALTHCARE STAFF</b>  <b>THIS PATIENT IS PHYSICALLY DEPENDENT ON DAILY STEROID THERAPY</b> as a critical medicine. It must be given/taken as prescribed and never omitted or discontinued. Missed doses, illness or surgery can cause adrenal crisis requiring emergency treatment.          Patients not on daily steroid therapy or with a history of steroid usage may also require emergency treatment.</p> <p>Name.....          Date of Birth ..... NHS Number .....</p> <p>Why steroid prescribed .....</p> <p>Emergency Contact .....</p>	<p>When calling 999 or 111, emphasise this is a likely adrenal insufficiency/Addison's/Addisonian crisis or emergency <b>AND</b> describe symptoms (vomiting, diarrhoea, dehydration, injury/shock).</p> <p><b>Emergency treatment of adrenal crisis</b></p> <p>1) Immediate 100mg Hydrocortisone i.v. or i.m. injection.          Followed by 24 hr continuous i.v. infusion of 200mg Hydrocortisone in Glucose 5% OR 50mg Hydrocortisone i.v. or i.m. qds (100mg if severely obese).</p> <p>2) Rapid rehydration with Sodium Chloride 0.9%.</p> <p>3) Liaise with endocrinology team.</p> <p> Scan here for further information or search <a href="https://www.endocrinology.org/adrenal-crisis">https://www.endocrinology.org/adrenal-crisis</a></p>
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## What should I do if I forget to take prednisolone?

If you forget to take a dose take it as soon as you remember. If it is almost time for your next dose miss the dose and continue as normal. Never take a double dose to catch up. If you take too much prednisolone speak to your doctor straight away.

## Are there any side effects?

Side-effect	Advice
Increased risk of infection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You may be prescribed medication to reduce this risk.</li> <li>Avoid contact with people known to have infections, including chickenpox.</li> <li>Speak to your doctor if you experience any signs of infection (e.g., fever, sore throat).</li> </ul>
Stomach irritation, indigestion, bloating or pain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You may be prescribed medication to protect the stomach.</li> <li>If you notice any blood in your vomit or stools you should see a doctor straightaway.</li> </ul>
Increased appetite/weight gain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can occur with long-term use.</li> <li>Maintain a healthy lifestyle.</li> </ul>
Increased blood sugars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your blood sugar will be monitored at the transplant clinic and if you are diabetic your medication may be adjusted.</li> </ul>
Bone weakness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can occur with long-term use.</li> <li>You may be prescribed medication to protect against this.</li> </ul>
Sleeping problems, mood changes, thinning of skin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Speak to your transplant clinic if you are concerned.</li> </ul>

\*A full list can be found in the information leaflet provided with your medication.

## What should I avoid whilst taking prednisolone?

Before buying any over-the-counter medicines, herbal medication or supplements seek advice from your transplant clinic or pharmacist. During each appointment, please inform

your transplant clinic of any new medication prescribed elsewhere. Speak to your transplant clinic before receiving any vaccines.

## How do I get a repeat prescription?

Prednisolone will be prescribed by your transplant clinic (not your GP) so please inform them when you are running low. Wherever possible it will be supplied via home delivery.

## Useful sources of information / contact us

This leaflet should be read alongside the manufacturer's information leaflet provided with your medication. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact:

St George's Hospital Transplant Clinic: Tel. 020 8725 2455

Chamneys Ward (Renal): Tel. 020 8725 1080

Renal Home Delivery Team: Tel. 020 8725 2320

**For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit [www.stgeorges.nhs.uk](http://www.stgeorges.nhs.uk)**

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## Additional services

### Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you on-the-spot advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or the care you have received. You can visit the PALS office between 9.30am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday in the main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough wings (near the lift foyer).

**Tel:** 020 8725 2453 **Email:** [pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk)

### NHS Choices

NHS Choices provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health.

**Web:** [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

### NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

**Tel:** 111

### AccessAble

You can download accessibility guides for all our services by searching 'St George's Hospital' on the AccessAble website ([www.accessable.co.uk](http://www.accessable.co.uk)). The guides are designed to ensure everyone – including those with accessibility needs – can access our hospital and community sites with confidence.

