

ORAL PREDNISONE THERAPY

Oral prednisone is one of the most effective treatments for severe, itchy, and inflamed skin conditions. As with all internal medication, it is important to take oral prednisone in the proper way to minimize any potential side effects.

Oral prednisone is generally taken in a two to three week course. A specific dose is given for the first seven days, a specific dose of a lesser amount for the next seven days, and for the last seven days another slightly lower dose. One example would be to take 60 mg (three pills) a day for the first week, 40 mg (two pills) a day for the second week, and 20 mg (one pill) for the last week.

The prednisone pills are taken together all at once in the morning. In other words, if you take three pills, you should take all three of them all at once in the morning. It is best to take the prednisone pills after something is in your stomach so it is important to eat breakfast and then take the medication.

The majority of patients who take prednisone in this fashion have no side effects. Occasionally there can be a mild stomach upset. Occasionally there can be a slight increase in water weight gain, especially in women, related to their menstrual cycle. As with any medicine there are extremely rare side effects. If any new problem would develop, please call my office.

Most people who take oral prednisone notice a significant improvement in their symptoms in a day or two but it is important to continue the treatment for the entire cycle. Often times the skin problem seems to be completely gone after only five or ten days of treatment so the temptation is to stop the treatment all together. If this is done then there is a risk that the original skin problem will return, even worse. Therefore, it is important to take the oral prednisone until it is completely finished.

Again, oral prednisone is a safe and effective treatment for many severe skin conditions. When taken on a daily basis for many months or years, prednisone can have more important side effects such as bone thinning or infections. These side effects do not occur in the short two to four week course of therapy. If you have any other questions regarding this treatment, please don't hesitate to ask me before you leave the office.