

Prednisone/Prednisolone

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SUMMARY:

- 1) This medication commonly makes pets hungry, thirsty and need to urinate.
- 2) If your pet is not hungry, has vomiting or diarrhea contact a veterinarian. This is especially important if the vomit or stool has black tar or blood in it.
- 3) Some dogs will pant while on this medication. This is normal.
- 4) This medication will slow down hair growth, and some pets will develop a thin hair coat while on this medication.
- 5) Long term use is associated with decreased healing, muscle wasting, increased infections and diabetes mellitus.

EXPLANATION:

Prednisone is an anti-inflammatory medication that is used in a wide variety of diseases.

Prednisone often has side effects, however most of these side effects, while annoying, are not dangerous. Long term use is associated with several complications which can be more serious. Discuss the pros and cons of long term use with your veterinarian.

Important side effects. Contact your veterinarian if you see any of the following:

1. Inappetence: it is not normal to skip a meal while on prednisone. Most pets are VERY hungry on this medication. Urgent contact with your veterinarian is recommended.
2. Vomiting or diarrhea, especially if there is black tar-like material or blood in either. Urgent contact with your veterinarian is recommended.
3. Contact your veterinarian if you see evidence of any skin problems- redness, crusting, itching or sores. Infections will not look as severe while your pet is on prednisone, but they require more aggressive treatment. Rarely prednisone can cause a more serious skin condition called calcinosis cutis.
4. Contact your veterinarian if there are any signs of a urinary tract infection, including bad odor to the urine or discoloration of the urine (brown, red). Prednisone may hide most or all of the symptoms of a urinary tract infection, which is why it is important to be vigilant.
5. Poor healing: Let your veterinarian know if your pet is on this medication and needs surgery or a similar procedure.
6. Diabetes mellitus: long term use of this medication, especially in cats, can result in and/or worsen diabetes.
7. Behavior changes: These are usually mild (excitement, depression), but rarely can be more severe (aggression, mania). Contact your veterinarian if you are concerned.

Annoying but not dangerous side effects. Often early in treatment we will ask you to try to tolerate these side effects as much as you can. These side effects will lessen and eventually go away as we decrease the medication over time. You should contact your veterinarian if any of these things are excessive and interfering with your pet's quality of life:



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1. Increased hunger
2. Increased thirst
3. Increased urination
4. Slow hair growth and thin, dull and/or dry hair coat
5. Weight gain
6. A pot-bellied appearance: this is more common with long term use.
7. Muscle wasting along the top of the head and spine: this is more common with long term use.
8. Elevation of liver enzymes on blood work. This does not indicate liver disease, and will reverse when the medication is stopped.

MONITORING

In some instances we have to use prednisone long term despite the side effects. For these pets it is important that we monitor carefully for side effects so that we can intervene before the side effects become serious.

Blood work, as well as a urinalysis and urine culture are recommended every 3 to 4 months while your pet is on prednisone.

SPECIAL PRECAUTIONS:

It is very important to tell your veterinarian if your pet has taken any nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) in the last week. NSAIDs cannot be given with prednisone/prednisolone and often we will want to take your pet off the NSAID for several days if not a week before starting prednisone/prednisolone. Giving these two medications together greatly increases the risk of GI ulcers, which can lead to serious health problems.

Examples of common NSAIDs: Rimadyl/Carprofen/Novox/Quellin, Metacam/Meloxicam, Deramaxx/Deracoxib, Etodolac/Etogesic, Aspirin, Zubrin/Tepoxalin, Previcox/Firocoxib

