

Coping with Prednisone

Side Effects

PATIENT TO PATIENT TIPS

Side Effect

Strategies to Try

Weight Gain / Increased Appetite

Awareness: recognize & avoid responding to cravings
Healthy diet: limited portions & low salt
Healthy proteins help curb cravings
Avoid trigger foods -- those you “can’t stop eating”
Ensure adequate potassium (bananas, citrus, spinach, squash)
Eat slowly (allows brain to register fullness)
Take small bites and savor
Brush teeth right after eating (creates brain signal to help avoid snacking)
Keep healthy snacks on hand (fruit, tree nuts)
Enlist family help to make meals less challenging
Don’t keep unhealthy foods in your home
Drink water or sparkling water throughout the day
Exercise (20+ minutes of daily walking)
Plan for food emergencies (no access to healthy food)
Use food diary or app to track intake
Add more healthy spices to food (reduces appetite)
Eat more beans/lentils: make you feel full for longer after a meal
For flavor & seasoning -- try infused olive oils & balsamic vinegars

Volatile Moods / Anger / Depression

Avoid triggers
Good communication with support network (let family & friends know)
Engage in Mindfulness/Spiritual/Meditation/Prayer practices
Limit stress
Join a support group
Request a patient navigator via FSR (stopsarcoidosis.org)
Medications are available (talk to doctor)

Insomnia / Hyperactivity

Take dose in the morning
Avoid caffeine
Melatonin supplement before bedtime
Calming environment, particularly in evening
Bedtime routine to signal brain
Herbal teas (chamomile, valerian, lavender) may help

Stomach / GI Upset

Take dose with food
Eat smaller meals
Avoid caffeinated beverages, chocolate, citrus, and tomatoes
Avoid snacking in the evening
Don’t lie down right after meals
Ginger or peppermint tea may help
Medications are available (talk to doctor)

Side Effect

Strategies to Try

Bone Density Loss	Regular DEXA bone scans to monitor Healthy diet (nonfat dairy & dark greens especially good) Smoking & alcohol increase risk Adequate calcium intake (1,000 mg/day+ combining diet & supplements) Adequate Vitamin D for calcium absorption (must be monitored) Weight-bearing exercise (walking, jumping, dancing) Medication to prevent bone loss (talk to doctor)
Fluid Retention / Swelling / High Blood Pressure	Low-salt diet Adequate potassium (bananas, apricots, oranges, tomatoes, spinach) Exercise Monitor blood pressure Watch for ankle swelling Drink water/sparkling water throughout the day Medication (talk to doctor)
Infection Risk	Adequate sleep Healthy diet Protection measures (hand washing, social distancing, masking) Maintain vaccinations (Covid, flu, shingles, pneumonia) Maximize steroid-sparing agents (talk to doctor)
High Blood Sugar / Insulin Resistance	Exercise Adequate sleep Healthy diet: limit simple carbs (sugar, pasta, potatoes, white flour) More (smaller) meals to prevent spikes Monitor carefully if diabetic or pre-diabetic Medication if diabetic (talk to doctor)
High Cholesterol	Healthy diet is critical (max soluble fiber) Eliminate trans and saturated fats Use spices (cinnamon, pepper, garlic, turmeric, ginger) to curb appetite Exercise at least 20 minutes per day (walking is great!) Stop smoking Limit alcohol Pursue laughter: funny movies, chat with friends, silly videos Medications are available (talk to doctor)
Fragile Skin / Thinning / Bruising	Daily sunscreen Wear hats outdoors Adequate Vitamin E & Vitamin C intake (diet & supplements) Apply Vitamin E fortified cream (increases collagen production) Adequate moisturizer (try Palmer's Cocoa Butter)