

Fact Sheet

News from the IBD Help Center

CORTICOSTEROIDS

Corticosteroids (often referred to simply as steroids) are powerful and fast-acting anti-inflammatory medications that reduce inflammation in both the intestine and throughout the body, including the joints, skin, and eyes. They are best suited for short-term control of IBD symptoms and disease activity and should NOT be used as a primary therapy for long periods of time.

Other important points to know about this class of medication:

- Depending on the specific medication, they can be taken orally or rectally (with enemas, suppositories, or rectal foams).
- Common types include prednisone, budesonide, and methylprednisolone.
- Corticosteroids exert their anti-inflammatory effect by suppressing immune system activity. As a result, they can leave individuals more susceptible to infections. They also can result in additional serious side effects depending upon the dose and duration, including:
 - High blood pressure
 - High blood sugar levels
 - Weakened bones
 - Cataracts
 - Weight gain
 - Acne
 - Rounding of the face (“moon face”)
 - Increased facial hair
 - Difficulty sleeping
 - Mood swings
 - Growth disturbance in children
- Due to the risks and side effects, when corticosteroids are used, doctors will try to minimize the length of time and dosage by tapering the medication (decreasing the dose gradually over time) when it is appropriate.

[Animated Video](#)

[View the full list of FDA-approved corticosteroids commonly prescribed for IBD](#)

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