



## **ORAL CORTICOSTEROIDS**

Expert review by Cutaneous Lymphoma Foundation's Medical Advisory Council  
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### **WHAT ARE ORAL CORTICOSTEROIDS?**

Corticosteroids are medications used to treat a variety of skin diseases that may be both acute and chronic in nature. This class of drug is related to cortisol, which occurs naturally in the body. Oral corticosteroid agents have a wide range of applications for many immune system related disorders. Specific to cutaneous T-cell lymphoma, prednisone or other like agents may be employed to down regulate inflammatory cells when the skin disease is extensive and symptoms are remarkable.

Examples of corticosteroid medications include cortisone, prednisone and methylprednisolone.

### **HOW ARE THEY DELIVERED?**

Prednisone and other agents in this class may be prescribed over a course of 2-3 weeks with a higher starting dose that is gradually reduced (tapered) to a lower dose. In other circumstances, oral steroids may be administered in a low dose for extended periods of time.

### **WHAT ARE COMMON SIDE EFFECTS?**

The following is not an exhaustive list of the possible side effects. For a complete list of possible side effects, please see the manufacturer's available information on the specific therapy.

Some of the more common side effects seen with prolonged oral steroids use may be: increased fluid retention and weight gain, increased blood pressure, elevated blood sugar, increased appetite, stomach irritation, mood elevation or mood swings, sleep disturbance, mild weakness of arms and legs, slow wound healing, osteoporosis, and acne.