

Neuro-ophthalmic Consultants Northwest
A division of Seattle Radiologist's A.P.C.

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Methylprednisolone - Patient Information

Brand Name

- "Solumedrol"

What it is

- An injectable medication that is a potent steroid with anti-inflammatory and immunosuppressant properties.

What it does

- Decreases active inflammation
- Short courses with high doses may stabilize active disease during a relapse
- Certain patients may receive regular doses of steroids in an attempt to alter the progression of the disease

How it works

- It reduces the immune system's ability to seek out and attack the nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord.

How it's given

- Intravenously

> Dose

- 500-1000 mg
- May be given once daily for 3 – 7 days for a relapse
- May be given once a month for long term therapy

Possible Side Effects

- Short-term
 - o Report any pain or discomfort near the IV site to your nurse
 - o Headache, facial flushing (reddening)
 - o Taste disturbances (metallic)

- o Increased blood sugar
- o Increased risk of infection
- o Nausea, vomiting, stomach pain
- o Increased blood pressure
- o Imbalance or increase of water and sodium retention
- o Leg cramps
- o Personality changes, difficulty sleeping, depression, irritability

Tips

- For difficulty sleeping, some over-the-counter medications such as Benadryl® (diphenhydramine) may help. Tylenol PM® contains the active ingredient in Tylenol® (acetaminophen) plus diphenhydramine and is ok to take but is no better than plain Benadryl® (diphenhydramine) for sleep unless you have pain that you need the acetaminophen for also.

> **Check with your pharmacist or physician before taking over-the-counter medications.**

- Your physician may instruct you to take an antacid such as Zantac® or Pepcid® while taking methylprednisolone.
- Having a piece of hard candy may help mask the metallic taste.
- Patients with diabetes should check their blood sugars more frequently during the first 24-48 hours after steroid treatment.
- Drink orange juice or eat bananas on the days that you receive methylprednisolone. This will help to replenish your potassium stores and may help to prevent leg cramps.
- Taking this medication may make you more susceptible to infections so you should avoid contact with sick people and wash your hands often.
- Talk to your health care provider before receiving any vaccines.

> Some vaccines you should avoid while others may not work while on this medication.

When to contact your healthcare provider: If you are experiencing:

- Chest tightness, trouble breathing, wheezing
- Rash, hives, extreme itchiness
- Swelling of the face or lips and swelling or tingling of the tongue and throat
- High fever, severe sore throat or any other signs of infection
- Fast heartbeat (palpitations), sweating, confusion
- Sudden pain or swelling in the legs, ankles, feet or hands
- Extreme headache, eye pain or trouble seeing
- Abnormal muscle pain or weakness
- If your stool is very black or you see blood in your stool
- Although methylprednisolone may be given to you if you are pregnant or breastfeeding an infant, contact your physician if you are or if you think you may be or if you would like to become pregnant or breastfeed an infant.