

## My Corticosteroid Plan

Corticosteroids (steroids for short) are fast-acting immunosuppressive medications that decrease inflammation in the body. They are helpful to reduce symptoms quickly during flares of your blistering disease. Some common names for steroids include **prednisone, prednisolone, dexamethasone, triamcinolone, clobetasol, hydrocortisone**.

### **How do I take them?**

Corticosteroids come in many forms: Intravenous (IV), oral pills, topical ointments and creams, or even as an oral rinse. It can be helpful to take oral steroids with food to prevent stomach upset.

### **How long will I take this medication?**

A great question to discuss with your doctor! Often, corticosteroids are started at higher doses (when inflammation is more intense) and tapered to a lower dose as your disease improves. If needed for long periods of time, your doctor may discuss starting a second medication (a steroid-sparing medication) to help reduce your exposure to steroid.

### **Do corticosteroids interact with my other medications?**

Make sure to tell your doctor your entire medication list, including over-the-counter medications such as NSAID (i.e. ibuprofen). Your doctor will verify that there are no drug-drug interactions.

### **My steroid dose tracker:**

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Daily dose (mg)				
Symptoms to share with my doctor				

## What are some side effects for corticosteroids?

Corticosteroids have several side affects you should be aware of:

Before starting steroids, here are some risk factors to discuss with your doctor:

- ☐ Heart Health
  - ☐ Steroids can increase blood pressure (bp).
    - ☐ My average blood pressure is \_\_\_\_\_.
    - ☐ My medications for high blood pressure are: \_\_\_\_\_.
  - ☐ Steroids can increase blood sugar levels, increasing risks for diabetes.
    - ☐ My hbA1c before steroids was \_\_\_\_\_.
    - ☐ My medications for diabetes are: \_\_\_\_\_.
  - ☐ Steroids can increase cholesterol.
    - ☐ My last cholesterol reading was \_\_\_\_\_.
    - ☐ My medications for high cholesterol are \_\_\_\_\_.
- ☐ Eye Health
  - ☐ Steroids can increase risk for cataracts and glaucoma.
  - ☐ Previous history of cataracts/ glaucoma?  
\_\_\_\_\_.
  - ☐ The date of my last eye exam was \_\_\_\_\_.
- ☐ Mental Health

- ☐ Steroids can affect your mood. Discuss if you have a history of any of these conditions with your doctor: depression, anxiety, insomnia, psychosis
- ☐ Are you being treated for psychiatric conditions? If so, talk to your doctor about your support system!
- ☐ Bone and muscle health
  - ☐ History of osteopenia/ osteoporosis: \_\_\_\_\_ (yes/no).
  - ☐ Date of last DEXA scan:  
\_\_\_\_\_.
  - ☐ Medications I take for bone health:  
\_\_\_\_\_.
- ☐ Skin health
  - ☐ Long-term use of steroids can lead to stretch marks, skin thinning and other skin changes. Let your doctor know if you are experiencing any concerning changes to your skin!

**Talk to your doctor about ways to reduce side-effects of steroid!** Be sure to talk to your doctor about any concerns and before starting something new.