

# DOCTORS FOSTER<sup>and</sup>SMITH<sup>®</sup> PHARMACY

## Patient Information Sheet

PO Box 100, Rhinelander WI 54501  
For questions or to consult with a pharmacist, call 1-800-447-3021 Mon-Fri from 9am-6pm CST and Sat from 9am-1pm CST. If you have an emergency situation, please contact your local veterinarian immediately.

## Corticosteroids

(Prednisone, Triamcinolone, Dexamethasone)

### Common Generic & Brand Names

Prednisolone: Solu-Delta-Cortef  
Prednisone: Meticorten, Sterapred  
Dexamethasone: Azium, Decadron  
Methylprednisolone: Depo-Medrol;  
Medrol  
Triamcinolone: Cortalone, Vetalog

Corticosteroids are also referred to as glucocorticosteroids, glucocorticoids, or sometimes simply as steroids.

### Storage

Store at room temperature, in tight, light resistant, childproof container.

### Uses

Corticosteroids are hormones used for the treatment of multiple conditions including adrenal insufficiency (Addison's disease); inflammation; autoimmune diseases, such as lupus, pemphigus, and some anemias; allergies including atopy; asthma; some cancers; and certain types of colitis and kidney diseases (nephrotic syndrome).

### Dose and Administration

Always follow the dosage instructions provided by your veterinarian. If you have difficulties giving the medication, contact your veterinarian.

Dosage depends on the product used. Your veterinarian may recommend starting at a higher dose and then reducing the dose every few days to a week.

If using the transdermal gel, apply to the skin as directed by your veterinarian.

If using an injectable form, use a new, sterile needle and syringe each time, and follow the proper technique, as directed by your veterinarian. Dispose of the needle and syringe according to local regulations.

If you miss a dose, contact your veterinarian to determine the next dose.

This medication should only be given to the pet for whom it was prescribed.

### Possible Side Effects

Side effects are usually dose dependent. If side effects occur, contact your veterinarian, who may decrease the dosage, frequency, or type of corticosteroid.

The most common side effects are increased appetite, drinking, and urination. Your pet may have more "accidents" and need to go outside or use the litter box more often.

Less common side effects include weight gain, panting, diarrhea, vomiting, and behavior changes.

Side effects of long-term use include muscle loss, weakness, and the development of diabetes or hyperadrenocorticism (Cushing's disease). The typical signs of these diseases are increased thirst, urination, and appetite. Animals with Cushing's disease may also develop thin skin, a poor hair coat, and a "pot-belly." Activation or worsening of hypothyroidism or pancreatitis.

Immune system suppression may occur, especially on higher doses, making a pet more susceptible to infection. Contact your veterinarian if your pet has a fever (over 103° F), painful urination (a sign of urinary tract infection), tiredness, sneezing, coughing, or runny eyes.

### Precautions

Not for use in animals with systemic fungal infections, some types of mange (mites), stomach ulcers, Cushing's disease, high blood pressure, kidney disease, or congestive heart failure.

Do not use in pregnant animals. May cause premature birth. Can cause birth defects in dogs, rabbits, and rodents.

If on long-term therapy, do not discontinue the drug abruptly. The dose needs to be tapered off over several weeks to allow the body to start making its own cortisol again.

May need to give additional steroids while tapering, if the animal is stressed.

May stunt growth if used in young, growing animals.

Consult with your veterinarian regarding the physical examinations and laboratory testing necessary prior to and during treatment with corticosteroids.

### Drug, Food, and Test Interactions

Consult your veterinarian before using corticosteroids with vitamins and supplements, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) such as aspirin, carprofen (Novox or Rimadyl), deracoxib (Deramaxx), etodolac (EtoGesic), meloxicam (Metacam), firocoxib (Previcox), tepoxalin (Zubrin); insulin, modified live vaccines, phenytoin, phenobarbital, rifampin, cyclosporine, estrogens, erythromycin, or mitotane, amphotericin B, furosemide, or thiazide, since interactions may occur.

Corticosteroids may cause abnormal levels of hepatic enzymes, thyroid hormone, cholesterol, and potassium in the blood, and can affect many laboratory tests. Make sure your veterinarian knows your pet is taking corticosteroids prior to testing.

### Signs of Toxicity/Overdose

An acute overdose is unlikely to cause problems. A chronic overdose is likely to cause signs of Cushing's disease or diabetes mellitus; both diseases commonly cause increased urinating, drinking, and eating. Abruptly stopping long-term treatment may cause signs of Addison's disease, including vomiting, weakness, collapse and sudden death.

If you know or suspect your pet has had an overdose, or if you observe any of these signs in your pet, contact your veterinarian immediately.

*Keep this and all other medications out of the reach of children and pets.*