

General information

Sunderland Teaching Primary Care Trust

What you can expect from us?

As an NHS Trust we aim to continually improve our service and invite feedback to help with this. Therefore we would like to hear from you.

You may give your feedback to the person or service directly providing your care. Alternatively to contact the Trust please telephone:

0191 529 7000

Trust Website address

www.sunderland.nhs.uk/teachingpct

What we expect from you

STPCT staff will treat everyone fairly and consistently, with dignity and respect. Staff, in return, hope that you will treat them in the same way, which will ensure we are all free from undue stress and anxiety.

PALS

As a patient, relative or carer sometimes you need to turn to someone for advice and support.

This is where we are here to help:

Patient Advice and Liaison Service

(PALS) Free phone – 0800 7312 326

This leaflet can be provided in other formats and languages on request.

For information on where to receive more copies of this leaflet or others, please telephone 0191 5656423 or go to resources section on Trust Website above.

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Code 0106/034**

STEROID THERAPY RECORD

Produced by The James Cook University Hospital
Neuro-oncology Team and adapted for use by
St Benedict's Hospice, Sunderland

Using this booklet

- This booklet belongs to you. Who reads your record is your decision and under your control.
- The booklet is designed to provide information about steroid use and to document any changes in your steroid dose.
- **Instructions for dose reduction should be recorded in this booklet along with times for further dose review.**
- It is hoped that this booklet will help to improve the communication between yourself and all of the health care professionals involved in your care (in hospital and community).
- Please take it with you when you visit your GP, nurse, go into hospital, or visit your dentist or pharmacist.
- The booklet is kept with you so that you have information handy if you ever need it.
- Everyone involved in your care can use this booklet to write down any important information about your condition or its treatment.
- All doctors and nurses who write in it will keep it confidential.
- What happens if you lose your record? Don't worry. Let your specialist palliative care nurse know.

Personal Details

Name

Address

Telephone number

Hospital number

DOB

Next of Kin

Contact Details

GP name

Address

Telephone number

District nurse

Tel:

Oncologist

Tel:

Macmillan nurse

Tel:

Diagnosis Details

Diagnosis

Date of Diagnosis

Other treatment

Steroid Details

Date steroids started

Name of steroid used

Reason for steroid use

Why are steroids used?

- Steroids are used to control a wide variety of symptoms. It is important that you understand why you have been started on steroids. Steroids can help to improve quality of life and can therefore be very beneficial.
- They are very different from the anabolic steroids used by some sports men, and do not increase muscle size.
- Steroids can also cause side effects. Each person's reaction to a drug is unique and some people have very few side effects. The effects vary according to the dose of the steroid you are having, and may be different if you are also receiving other drugs.
- It is essential that your steroid dose be monitored regularly. Careful monitoring helps you to get maximum symptom benefit from the smallest possible dose of steroids. It is often a question of finding the balance between the problems and the benefits.
- Your doctor may alter the dose of your steroids. It is important that you keep a record of any dose changes in this booklet. Some patients are able to tail off their steroids completely and others need to be kept on steroids longer term.
- If you are unsure about your steroid dose, please contact your doctor or specialist nurse. Please let your doctor know if you develop steroid side effects. Ensure that your steroid dose is reviewed regularly.

Steroid Preparations



- **Dexamethasone** is the name of a commonly used steroid. Occasionally a steroid called **Prednisolone** may be used.
- Dexamethasone tablets come in two strengths: 0.5mg and 2mg.
- The dose of dexamethasone that is required to control swelling could vary a lot from a minimum of half a milligram (0.5mg) to 16 milligrams per day.
- Liquid dexamethasone and soluble prednisolone tablets are available for people who have difficulty swallowing.
- In hospital, dexamethasone can be given as an injection into a vein or under the skin.

Do's



- Make sure you keep information in this booklet up to date
- Inform anyone who treats you (e.g. doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentist) that you are taking steroids. This also applies if you have stopped the steroids in the last year.
- Consult your doctor promptly if you become ill, or if you come into contact with anyone who has an infectious disease. If you have never had chickenpox, you should avoid close contact with people who have chickenpox or shingles. If you do come into contact with chickenpox, see your doctor urgently.
- Consult a doctor immediately if you feel unwell on reducing the steroids, or if your original symptoms come back.
- Keep your tablets in a safe place well out of the reach of children.
- If you are sick just after taking the tablet ask your doctor whether or not you should take another steroid tablet.
- Take a tablet to protect your stomach (e.g. Lansoprazole) when on steroids. This helps to prevent stomach problems whilst taking steroids.
- Take steroids in the morning after food, to prevent them from interfering with sleep at night.

DO NOT



- Do not stop steroids suddenly. The dose should be reduced gradually when you stop taking steroids unless your doctor says otherwise.
- Do not change the dose of steroids without instructions from your doctor.
- Do not flush steroids down the toilet. Return tablets to any pharmacy for disposal.
- If you forget to take your tablet, do not take a double dose. Let your nurse or doctor know.

Steroid side effects

Some of the more common and less common side effects are described here, so that you are aware of them if they occur.



If you notice any other effects that you feel may be related to steroids please tell your doctor.

- **Indigestion:** Steroids can cause irritation of the stomach lining. To reduce this side effect, take your steroids with or after meals. Drugs such as **Lansoprazole** can help prevent indigestion.
- **Change in blood sugar levels:** Steroids can cause an increase in blood sugar levels. Tell your doctor if you feel thirsty, or if you are passing more urine than normal. If you have diabetes, your blood sugars may rise and your diabetic medication will need reviewing. Blood sugar levels improve when steroids are reduced.
- **Increased appetite and weight gain:** You may feel hungrier than usual and want to eat more. Make sure you eat a healthy diet. Make sure healthy snacks are available in place of sweets and cakes. If you are concerned about weight gain, contact your doctor/nurse. It is important that you do not put on too much weight.
- **Fluid retention:** You may notice that your ankles and/or fingers swell. Your stomach may feel bloated. This may be helped by gentle exercise.

Name of Steroid	Date	Daily dose/mg	Reason for change of dose	Next steroid review date

If you are unclear about anything, ask your doctor/pharmacist for advice

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If you are unclear about anything, ask your doctor/pharmacist for advice

Further Information

- You can use this section any way you prefer.
- You may wish to write down questions to ask your doctor/nurse when you see them.
- You may ask your doctor or nurse to record new information in this section.
- Some people may wish to record changes to other medication, scan results or blood results.

Further Information

