

OCS OVEREXPOSED

CONVERSATION STARTER

Oral corticosteroids (OCS) are important medicines that are often used to treat asthma flare-ups because they reduce inflammation and swelling in the airways quickly.

However, overexposure to OCS carries serious health risks, and repeated OCS use may actually be a clue that you or your loved one's asthma is not under control and the treatment plan is failing. Speak to your doctor before making any changes to your treatment plan.

Take a moment to complete the checklist below before your next doctor visit to avoid unnecessary OCS exposure. It may be a sign asthma is uncontrolled if you or your loved one:

- Had more than two courses – or bursts – of OCS in a one year period
- Used a quick-relief or rescue inhaler more than two times per week
- Refilled a quick-relief or rescue inhaler more than two times a year
- Struggle doing everyday activities like exercising, household chores or playing with children or grandchildren
- Had one or more asthma flares requiring a call to 911, emergency room visit, urgent care visit or hospitalization in the past year



OCS overexposure has both short- and long-term risks. If you or your loved one has taken bursts of OCS and are concerned about experiencing any of these symptoms, mark them below to share with your doctor.

SHORT-TERM RISKS INCLUDE:

-  elevated eye pressure (glaucoma)
Common signs: blurred or distorted vision, vision loss
-  fluid retention
Common signs: swelling, rapid unexpected weight gain
-  high blood pressure
Common signs: headache, blurred vision, dizziness, shortness of breath
-  weight gain
-  problems with mood, stress, memory and behavior

LONG-TERM RISKS INCLUDE:

-  cataracts
Common signs: blurred vision, trouble seeing in dim light, seeing halos around light, vision loss
-  infections
-  osteoporosis (thinning of the bones which increases risk of broken bones and fractures)
Common signs: receding gums, decreased grip strength, weak fingernails, cramps, aches, height loss, general low fitness
-  high blood sugar levels in people with diabetes
-  thin skin, bruising, and a slower healing process for wounds
-  adrenal insufficiency, which stops the body from making enough important hormones and can make it harder to manage stress or recover from infections

PRINT THIS PAGE FOR THE NEXT CONVERSATION WITH YOUR DOCTOR.