

CORTICOSTEROIDS*			
Generic Name	Use	Side Effects	Comments
prednisone	Suppress inflammation	Fluid retention, weight gain, facial hair growth, easy bruising, peptic ulcer, loss of calcium from bones (increases risk of fractures), cataracts, acne, bacterial infection, adrenal suppression (at doses above 5 mg per day), sleeplessness, muscle wasting and weakness, headache	Side effects are related to dosage and length of therapy: if taken for a week or less, side effects do not usually occur at low doses; therapy for several months or years causes more noticeable and serious side effects, even at low doses
methylprednisolone	Suppress inflammation in severe organ disease or life-threatening disease		
injectable corticosteroids	Relieve pain and suppress inflammation of synovitis, bursitis, tendinitis, or carpal tunnel syndrome	Same as above; also tenderness, burning, or tingling at injection site	Injected into joints, tendon sheaths, or bursae; undesirable systemic side effects seldom occur; risk of joint infections, cartilage damage

*Corticosteroids suppress the adrenal glands, which produce natural steroids. Abruptly stopping oral steroids can cause a life-threatening condition called *Addisonian crisis*. For this reason, corticosteroids must be taken exactly as prescribed. The dosage is lowered gradually, often over a period of several weeks or months, before corticosteroids are stopped.