

# Dexamethasone Tablets

## What to Expect

Dexamethasone (*dex-a-METH-a-sone*) is a corticosteroid. It is commonly used to treat inflammation of the skin, joints, lungs, and other organs. Common conditions treated include asthma, allergies, and arthritis. It is also used for other conditions, such as blood disorders and diseases of the adrenal glands.

## What Should I Tell My Health Care Provider Before I Take This Medicine?

They need to know if you have any of these conditions:

- Cushing's syndrome
- Diabetes
- Glaucoma
- Heart disease
- High blood pressure
- Infections such as herpes, measles, tuberculosis, or chickenpox
- Kidney or liver disease
- Mental illness
- Myasthenia gravis
- Osteoporosis
- Previous heart attack
- Seizures
- Stomach or intestine problems
- Thyroid disease
- An unusual or allergic reaction to dexamethasone, corticosteroids, other medicines, lactose, foods, dyes, or preservatives

- Pregnant or trying to get pregnant
- Breastfeeding

## How Should I Use This Medicine?

Take this medicine by mouth with a drink of water. Follow the directions on the prescription label. Take it with food or milk to avoid stomach upset. If you are taking this medicine once a day, take it in the morning. **DO NOT** take more medicine than you are told to take. **DO NOT** suddenly stop taking your medicine because you may develop a severe reaction. Your doctor will tell you how much medicine to take; if your doctor wants you to stop the medicine, the dose may be slowly lowered over time to avoid any side effects.

Talk to your pediatrician regarding the use of this medicine in children. Special care may be needed. Patients over 65 years old may have a stronger reaction and need a smaller dose.

**Overdosage:** If you think you have taken too much of this medicine, contact a poison control center or emergency room at once.

**NOTE:** This medicine is only for you. **DO NOT** share this medicine with others.

## What If I Miss a Dose?

If you miss a dose, take it as soon as you can. If it is almost time for your next dose, talk to your doctor or health care provider. You may need to miss a dose or take an extra dose. **DO NOT** take double or extra doses without advice.

## What May Interact With This Medicine?

**DO NOT** take this medicine with any live virus vaccines. The medicine may also interact with the following medications on the following page:

- Aminoglutethimide
- Amphotericin B
- Aspirin and aspirin-like medicines
- Certain antibiotics, such as erythromycin, clarithromycin, and troleandomycin
- Certain antivirals for HIV or hepatitis
- Certain medicines for seizures, such as carbamazepine, phenobarbital, or phenytoin
- Certain medicines to treat myasthenia gravis
- Cholestyramine
- Cyclosporine
- Digoxin
- Diuretics
- Ephedrine
- Female hormones, such as estrogen, progestins, or birth control pills
- Insulin or other medicines for diabetes
- Isoniazid
- Ketoconazole
- Medicines that relax muscles for surgery
- Mifepristone
- NSAIDs or medicines for pain inflammation, such as ibuprofen or naproxen
- Rifampin
- Skin tests for allergies
- Thalidomide
- Vaccines
- Warfarin

This list may not describe all possible interactions. Give your health care provider a list of all the medicines, herbs, non-prescription drugs, or dietary supplements you use. Also tell them if you smoke, drink alcohol, or use illegal drugs. Some items may interact with your medicine.

## What Should I Watch For While Using This Medicine?

Visit your health care provider for regular checks on your progress. Tell your health care provider if your symptoms **DO NOT** start to get better or if they get worse. Your condition will be monitored carefully while you are receiving this medicine. Wear a medical ID bracelet or chain. Carry a card that describes your disease and details of your medicine and dosage times.

This medicine may increase your risk of getting an infection. Call your health care provider for advice if you get a fever, chills, sore throat, or other symptoms of a cold or flu. **DO NOT** treat yourself. Watch for signs of oral thrush, including changes in taste, sensitivity to the tongue or mucus membranes, and discoloration. Avoid being around people who are sick. Call your health care provider if you are around anyone with measles or chickenpox, or if you develop sores or blisters that **DO NOT** heal properly.

If you are going to need surgery or other procedures, tell your doctor or health care provider that you have taken this medicine within the last 12 months. Ask your doctor or health care provider about your diet. You may need to lower the amount of salt you eat. This medicine may increase blood sugar. Ask your health care provider if changes in diet or medicines are needed if you have diabetes.

## What Side Effects May I Notice From Receiving This Medicine?

Side effects that you should report to your doctor or health care provider as soon as possible include:

- Allergic reactions, such as skin rash, itching or hives, or swelling of the face, lips, or tongue
- Bloody or black, tarry stools
- Changes in emotions or moods
- Changes in vision
- Confusion, excitement, or restlessness
- Depressed mood
- Eye pain

- Hallucinations
- Fever or chills, cough, sore throat, pain, or difficulty passing urine
- Muscle weakness
- Severe or sudden stomach or belly pain
- Signs and symptoms of high blood sugar, such as being thirstier or hungrier or having to urinate more than normal; you may also feel tired or have blurry vision
- Swelling of ankles or feet
- Unusual bruising or bleeding
- Wounds that do not heal

Side effects that usually do not require medical attention (report to your doctor or health care provider if they continue or are bothersome). These include:

- Increased appetite
- Increased growth of face or body hair
- Headache
- Nausea or vomiting
- Skin problems, acne, or thin and shiny skin
- Trouble sleeping
- Weight gain

This list may not describe all possible side effects. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

## **Where Should I Keep My Medicine?**

Keep out of reach of children. Store at room temperature between 20 and 25° C (68 and 77° F). Protect from light. Throw away any unused medicine after the expiration date.

*NOTE:* This sheet is a summary. It may not cover all possible information. If you have questions about this medicine, talk to your doctor, pharmacist, or health care provider. You can reach your Radiation Oncology care team at 214-645-8525.