

Diet guidelines for children taking corticosteroids

What are corticosteroids (steroids)?

Corticosteroids (steroids) are medicines sometimes used to treat:

- Asthma
- Skin disorders
- Arthritis
- Cancer
- Other medical conditions

Side effects may include:

- Increased appetite (wants to eat more than normal)
- Retaining fluids
- Weight gain
- High blood glucose (blood sugar)
- Increased loss of bone minerals

How can I help prevent fluid retention in my child?

To help prevent your child from retaining too much fluid:

- **Avoid adding salt to their food.**
- Use herbs and spices to flavor foods rather than salt.
- **Avoid** high salt (sodium) foods, such as:
 - Fast food
 - Chips
 - Canned soups
 - Highly processed foods
- **Offer** fresh choices, such as:
 - Fresh vegetables
 - Fresh fruits
 - Fresh poultry, fish and meats
 - Homemade soups
 - Home-cooked meals

How can I help manage my child's blood glucose and weight gain?

To help your child maintain normal blood glucose levels and limit weight gain:

- **Avoid** sweet drinks, such as:
 - Fruit juice

In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.

Diet guidelines for children taking corticosteroids, continued

- Fruit drinks
- Sodas
- Punch
- Sweet tea
- Sports drinks
- Encourage your child to drink lots of plain water.
- **Limit** concentrated sweets, and only give them with a meal when served. Some sweets include:
 - Cakes
 - Pies
 - Cookies
 - Chocolate
 - Candy
- Have regular meals and planned snacks.
- Allow your child to eat to appetite at meals and planned snacks, but give only water between meals and snacks.
- Encourage them to play outside every day.
- Plan fun physical activities for the whole family.
- Make changes for the whole family, not just 1 child.
- Limit screen time to less than 2 hours each day. This includes TV, computer games, video games, and cell phone use.

Does my child need a vitamin or mineral supplement?

Your child may need extra calcium or vitamin D. Talk with the doctor or nutritionist if you have questions.

Who should I call if I have questions?

Call the doctor or nutritionist if you have any questions about your child's diet.

This teaching sheet contains general information only. Talk with your child's doctor or a member of your child's healthcare team about specific care of your child.

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