

TPM

Therapeutic Pain Management Medical Clinic

Redding Anesthesia Associates Medical Group

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The following Frequently Asked Questions and the answers are for **Corticosteroids**. **The following material is given as general information only, and is not to be considered as medical advice or consultation.** The information was prepared by the TPM staff.

Corticosteroids

What are corticosteroids?

- Corticosteroids (sometimes called just “steroids”) are potent anti-inflammatory medications. They reduce inflammation and the swelling associated with inflammation.
- Your body makes a natural corticosteroids hormone called cortisol. This hormone is important for many functions. It helps to regulate the metabolism as well as the mineral and fluid balance of the body. During periods of stress (such as injury or surgery) the body markedly increases the amount of cortisol produced.

Examples of corticosteroids used in the pain clinic are:

- Depo-Medrol (methylprednisolone)
- Kenalog-40 (triamcinolone)
- Aristocort (triamcinolone)
- Decadron (dexamethasone)

Depo-Medrol and Aristocort are “depot” medications. This means that they are powders suspended in liquid. They dissolve slowly, working for days to weeks.

Are these the same “steroids” that bodybuilders use?

No. Anabolic steroids used by bodybuilders are completely different medications with different effects.

What are the common side effects of corticosteroids?

- Flushing or a feeling of warmth
- Some fluid retention
- Menstrual irregularity
- Increased appetite

Any corticosteroid injection can reduce your resistance to infection, especially viral infections.

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Diabetics can see higher blood sugars for a few days after a corticosteroid injection. They should be careful to check their blood sugars until they're back to normal.

Are there serious side effects from corticosteroids?

Yes. But they usually seen only with large doses or with long term daily doses. To lessen the risk of these side effects, the TPM doctors limit the amount and frequency of the corticosteroids they give patients.

These potential serious side effects include:

- Psychological disturbance-euphoria, depression, aggression
- Osteoporosis (thinning of the bones)-only seen when high doses are received over long periods of time
- Adrenal suppression-suppress the body's ability to make cortisol

If you have any questions about corticosteroids, please ask the TPM nurse or your TPM physician.