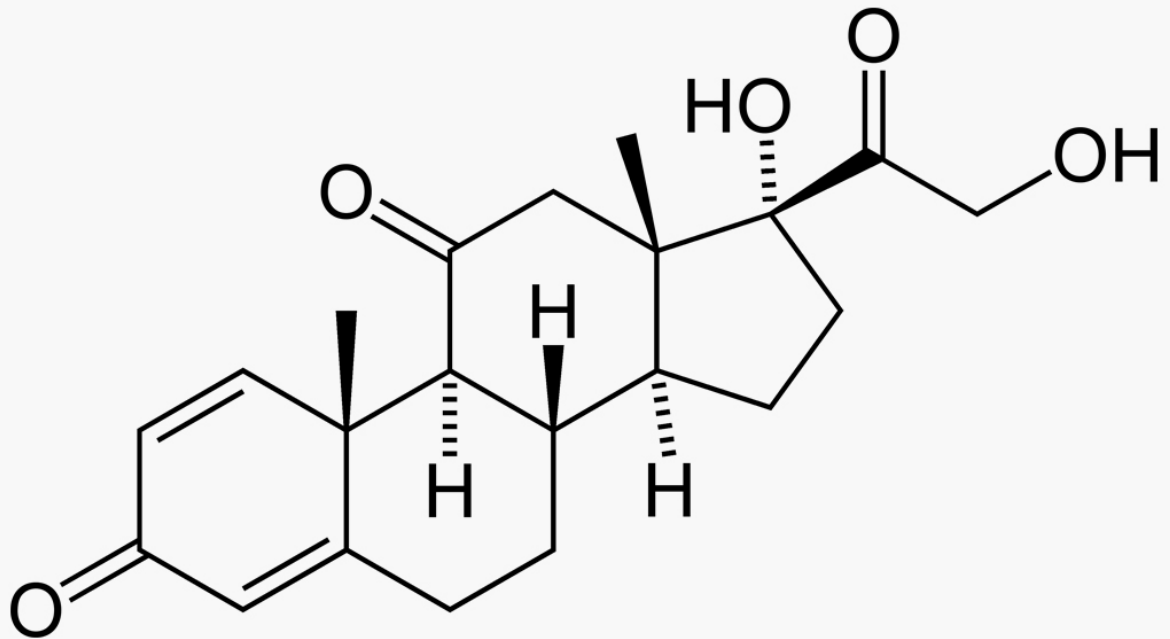


CJ TAKEAWAY

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Prednisone
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In this CJ Takeaway:

What is Prednisone: the Basics

- What prednisone is not
- After antibiotics, the most important drug ever discovered?
- How does prednisone work?
- Do the benefits outweigh the risks?



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WHAT IS PREDNISONE: THE BASICS

Prednisone is a corticosteroid—steroid for short—and corticosteroids, despite adverse side effects, are considered an essential component in the treatment of autoimmune and inflammatory conditions such as **rheumatoid arthritis**, **psoriatic arthritis** and **ankylosing spondylitis**. For **osteoarthritis**, corticosteroids are sometimes injected into an affected joint for pain relief.

Hailed as a miracle drug when it was first developed in 1955, prednisone's reputation took continual hits over the years as its side effects became known—in addition to high blood sugar, cardiovascular disease, weight gain, and osteoporosis, prednisone may also contribute to increased infection risk, hypertension, depression, cataracts, and peptic ulcer disease.



WHAT PREDNISONE IS NOT

To add insult to Prednisone's reputation injury, there are a lot of misconceptions and misinformation surrounding the drug. Prednisone, for example, is not the sort of steroid bodybuilders use to increase muscle mass.



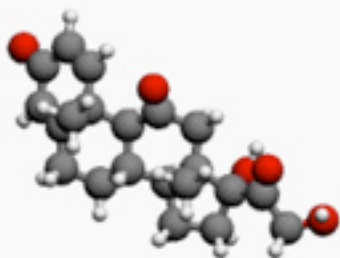
Myth Breaker: Prednisone is NOT an anabolic steroid

Prednisone is **not** the same as anabolic steroids used by weight lifters. And as the physicians of gihealth.com further note, Prednisone is also, “**not** a sex hormone like testosterone or estrogen and does **not** cause sexual dysfunction.

Prednisone is not addictive. It does **not** cause drowsiness and in the usual doses will not affect your driving or working. There is no special food interaction and mild alcohol consumption is **not** a problem on prednisone.”

HOW DOES PREDNISONE WORK?

Corticosteroids such as prednisone block the production of substances that trigger allergic and inflammatory actions. This can reduce the symptoms of conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis. Unfortunately, corticosteroids also suppress the immune system which can also increase susceptibility to infection.



AFTER ANTIBIOTICS, THE MOST IMPORTANT DRUG EVER DISCOVERED?

Prednisone is a synthetic corticosteroid drug. The first corticosteroid, cortisone, was administered in September 1948 to a Mrs. Gardner, a 29-year-old chair-bound woman with rheumatoid arthritis. According to *Rheumatology: Oxford Journals*, Mrs. Gardner had refused to leave the Mayo Clinic until she had some relief. After four days of daily injections of the experimental cortisone drug, she was able to walk out of the clinic.

Thirteen more patients would receive cortisone injections with similar effects. These results were reported at the April 1949 Mayo Clinic meeting. The ‘before’ and ‘after’ films of the patients received a standing ovation. A *New York Times* journalist in attendance reported the ‘modern miracle’ to the world.



Edward C. Kendall (seated) and Philip S. Hench (far right) of the Mayo Clinic were awarded the Nobel Prize in 1950 for the isolation and first clinical use of cortisone.

In 1955, a team of scientists at the Schering Corporation discovered how to produce prednisone chemically from cortisone. Prednisone is often cited as **one of the most significant medical advances of 20th century**. Writing in *About.com*, Vincent Iannelli, MD, said “After the discovery of antibiotics, prednisone may be one of the more important types of medicines ever discovered.”

DO THE BENEFITS OUTWEIGH THE RISKS?

Arthritis Today notes that corticosteroids such as prednisone come with well-known side effects, but newly discovered benefits may be balancing their reputation. If you are taking prednisone, be sure to work with your doctor to take steps to reduce side effects so the benefits outweigh the risks.