

# Dexamethasone Precautions and Side Effects



## DEXAMETHASONE (DECADRON®)

Indication	Dose	Route
Soft tissue pain Bone pain	2-4 mg. BID TID	PO or IV
Nerve compression Visceral distention Lymphedema Severe bone pain	4-8 mg BID to TID	PO or IV
Headache, confusion from increased intracranial pressure	4-12 mg TID-QID	PO or IV
Intractable nausea/vomiting	8-16 mg Q day in divided doses	PO or IV
Acute spinal cord compression	40 mg IV stat, then 10 mg IV q 6 h + or- radiation treatment Change to PO when symptoms controlled	IV

### Criteria for Use

- Perform Complete Physical Assessment including:
- Vital signs, cardiovascular, pulmonary, GI systems, specifically constipation/urinary retention
- Pertinent Medical History: diabetes, CHF, hypertension, PUD/GI bleed, psychosis, depression, glaucoma, osteoporosis, myasthenia gravis, hypothyroidism, tuberculosis, systemic fungal infections, herpes infection, hepatic disease. Recent surgery, MI or vaccination.
- Review OTC and prescription meds for safety of concomitant use
- Documented corticosteroid responsive pain syndrome: soft tissue or bone pain, nerve compression, visceral distention, lymphedema, headache associated with increased intracranial pressure, acute spinal cord compression, intractable vomiting

**Precautions**

- Evaluate in several days for favorable response, if none, discontinue treatment
- Maintain lowest effective dose
- If discontinuing after 3 days administration, taper dose

**Side Effects**

- Hyperglycemia, fluid tension, hypertension, oral candidiasis, gastritis, ulcer potential, anticipate and manage with appropriate pharmacologic interventions.
- Insomnia, excitability, and psychosis should be treated with dose reduction, time of administration change or discontinuation
- Proximal myopathy can occur with chronic use; treat with dose reduction if possible and physical therapy

