

Penn Pituitary Center

Patient Instructions for Glucocorticoid Dose Tapering

1. Identify symptoms of the condition that is being treated with a steroid (prednisone/dexamethasone/hydrocortisone/methylprednisolone). If those symptoms flair during the taper, please contact your physician who is managing the condition
2. Plan to taper around weekends or periods time when you do not expect additional responsibilities and are otherwise well (do not attempt if getting over a cold, flu, trauma, surgery ect.)
3. You can expect to experience symptoms of **steroid withdrawal** with dose decreases: fatigue, body aches, nausea, appetite, and lightheadedness
4. These symptoms are typically most uncomfortable during first 1-2 days, and are usually significantly better, but not gone on day 3
5. If you are not able to return to your usual responsibilities on day 3, you may wish to add back ½ of the dose reduction you've attempting and try again in 1-2 weeks or when fully better
6. For body aches please take 1000 mg every 6 hrs. as needed
7. Rest as needed to deal with fatigue
8. Please continue to hydrate well with broth or Pedialyte even if the appetite is low
9. If having difficulty with a particular dose reduction in your plan, decreasing dose change and slowing down the process usually helps to "get over the hump."