

Steroids and Cystic Fibrosis related Diabetes

This leaflet tells you about Cystic Fibrosis related Diabetes and Steroids. It explains what is involved and the common complications associated with this condition and treatment. It is not meant to replace discussion between you and your doctor, but as a guide to be used in connection to what is discussed with your doctor.

Oral steroids (corticosteroids) are used in your treatment to reduce inflammation of the lungs (asthma) and are also used in the treatment of allergic bronchopulmonary aspergillosis (ABPA). Taking oral steroids often causes a rise in your blood glucose.

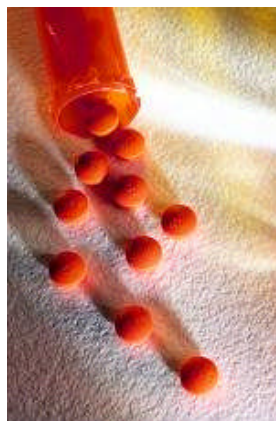


Why does my blood sugar rise when taking steroids?

The reason your blood glucose levels rise during steroid treatment is that the liver produces more glucose than normal and your body is not able to produce enough insulin to cope with this increase. Steroids can also cause your body to become resistant to either the insulin your body produces or the insulin you inject, this is known as insulin resistance.

Insulin is a hormone produced by the pancreas that helps glucose enter the cells where it is used as fuel for the body.

If you take steroid tablets in the morning your blood glucose may rise dramatically during the afternoon and evening one or two days after starting steroids.



What should I do when I start taking steroids?

You should monitor your blood glucose more frequently.

What should I do with my diabetic medication?

- If you are not on any treatment for diabetes you may be given a meter to monitor your blood glucose and you may need to start on medication to lower your blood glucose.
- If you are taking tablets for your diabetes these may need to be increased or you may need insulin.
- If you are taking insulin for your diabetes you may need to increase your insulin dose while taking the steroids especially before your meals.

Treatment will be based on your glucose level and on how long you will be on steroids.

What should I do with my diet?

If your blood sugars increase whilst you are on steroids, it is advisable to avoid sugary drinks and sweets. Choose sugar free drinks, no added sugar squash, tea and coffee with sweeteners, but continue to eat sugar containing foods such as chocolates, cakes, biscuits, yogurts and puddings.

What should I do when my steroid treatment is reduced or stopped?

If your steroids are reduced or stopped your blood glucose may fall and you will need to reduce your insulin or tablets or you will be at risk of hypoglycaemia. (Low blood glucose levels).

Your blood glucose levels should return to their previous levels one or two days after stopping your steroids.

You may only need steroids when you are unwell and your diabetes treatment may need to be changed according to this.

Contact us

For further advice and support with your diabetes control please contact:

CF Diabetes Specialist Nurse Kirpal Marwa

0121 424 3577 or 0121 424 1176

Monday – Friday 0800-1600

Additional Information Sources:

For more information on all aspects of living with Cystic Fibrosis you can visit the Cystic Fibrosis Trust web site at : www.cftrust.org.uk.

For local news and events the West Midlands Regional Cystic Fibrosis Unit based at Heartland Hospital has its own website at: www.heartlandscf.org.uk .

Information for Patients

You may want to visit our Health Information Centres located at the Main Entrance at Birmingham Heartlands Hospital, Tel: 0121 424 2280, or at the Treatment Centre at Good Hope Hospital Tel: 0121 424 9946 or Email: healthinfo.centre@heartofengland.nhs.uk

Our commitment to confidentiality

We keep personal and clinical information about you to ensure you receive appropriate care and treatment. Everyone working in the NHS has a legal duty to keep information about you confidential.

We will always ask you for your consent if we need to use information that identifies you. We will share information with other parts of the NHS to support your healthcare needs, and we will inform your GP of your progress unless you ask us not to. You can help us by pointing out any information in your records which is wrong or needs updating.

Please use the space below to write down any questions you may want to ask: