

What to eat when your child takes Prednisone

Your child has been put on a medication called Prednisone. It is used to treat many conditions.

Prednisone may cause your child to:

- have weak and brittle bones
- have an increase in the amount of salt and water in his or her body
- feel hungry more often

To help manage these possible side effects, your child will need to:

1. Eat healthy
2. Exercise each day

This handout will show you how to make these changes.

Eat healthy

Here are 3 important areas to pay attention to when your child takes Prednisone:

1. Include foods with calcium and vitamin D.
 2. Eat less salt.
 3. Choose foods more often that are high in fibre and low in fat and sugar.
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1. Include foods with calcium and vitamin D

Make sure your child eats foods that have calcium and vitamin D. Calcium and vitamin D help your child's bones stay strong and healthy. Milk and Alternatives are good sources of calcium and vitamin D.

Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide recommends your child has foods from the **Milk and Alternatives** group every day.

This chart shows you how many servings are needed each day depending on your child's age. For a copy of the guide go to: <http://www.healthcanada.ca/>

Age	Milk and Alternatives food group – servings a day
2 to 3 years	2
4 to 8 years	2
9 to 18 years	3 to 4

Milk and Alternatives food group

Foods	Examples of 1 serving
Skim or 1% milk	250 ml or 1 cup
Low fat or lite cheese (less than 20% milk fat MF)	50 grams or 1 ½ ounces
Low fat or light yogurt (less than 2 % MF)	175 ml or ¾ cup
Kefir	175 ml or ¾ cup
Soy or rice beverage (fortified with calcium and vitamin D)	250 ml or 1 cup

Tips to increase calcium and vitamin D:

- ask if there is a milk program at your child's school or if there is milk your child can buy in the cafeteria
- send low-fat milk and low-fat yogurt in your child's lunch with a cooler pack
- make muffins with low-fat yogurt as an ingredient
- add low-fat milk to cereal, mashed potatoes, pudding, muffins, oatmeal, casseroles or cream soup

2. Eat less salt

Eating less salt means eating less sodium.

1 teaspoon salt = 2300 mg sodium

Most of the sodium we eat is found in processed or ready-to-eat foods.

Prednisone can cause an increase in sodium, in your child's body. Eating foods high in sodium can cause water to build up in your child's ankles and face. By limiting sodium in your child's diet you can prevent this.

Your child may be eating sodium from:

- salt added at the table or when cooking.
- processed foods

First step – remove any added salt at the table or during cooking.

Next step – avoid foods high in sodium – see list on pages 4 and 5.

Foods high in sodium

Limit these foods:

Meats and Alternatives:

- deli meats
- ham, bacon, hotdogs
- canned baked beans
- fish with batter
- pickled meats or eggs
- salted nuts

Grain Products:

- salted crackers
- breads or rolls with salted tops
- prepared rice and pasta mixes
- canned pastas or packaged pastas such as Mr. Noodles, Alphagetti
- instant oatmeal
- high salt cereals such as Captain Crunch, Cocoa Krispies, Corn Flakes, Frosted Flakes, Golden Grahams, Honey Nut Cheerios, Life, Raisin Bran

Milk and Alternatives:

- processed cheese such as Kraft singles, string cheese
- cheese sauces or spreads such as Cheese Whiz
- high salt cheese such as blue, cottage, feta, parmesan, ricotta, American, Swiss

Vegetables:

- pickled vegetables
 - canned vegetables
 - prepared potato mixes
 - V8 or other vegetable juices
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Other:

- salted popcorn, pretzels or corn chips
- canned soup or gravy
- packaged meals such as Kraft dinner, Sidekicks
- table salt, sea salt, garlic salt or celery salt
- soy or Worcestershire sauce
- seasoned coating mixes such as Shake'n'bake
- condiments such as ketchup
- pizza or pizza pops
- french fries, unless prepared without salt

3. Choose foods more often that are high in fibre, low in fat and sugar.

Eating healthy includes foods that are lower in fat and sugar and higher in fibre. These foods will help to control your child's hunger while taking Prednisone and allow him or her to grow and develop as they should for their age. Aim to have these foods at all meals and snacks.

Most importantly limit fried foods and high sugar snacks.

Tips for healthy meals:

- have fruits and vegetables at every meal and snack
- choose whole grain breads, cereals, English muffins
- choose low-fat milk choices (skim or 1%)
- choose low-fat cheeses (less than 20% milk fat)
- include meat alternatives such as legumes, egg whites, soy products
- choose lean cuts of meat:
 - deli meats: turkey or chicken
 - fish: fresh or frozen
 - poultry: skinless chicken, turkey
 - veal: all cuts except cutlets
 - beef: round, sirloin, flank, steak tenderloin, extra lean ground beef
 - pork: tenderloin

- keep butter, margarine and salt off the table while eating
- give your child some water or milk to drink before the meal so they will be fuller when starting the meal
- offer your child seconds of vegetables, salad or fruit instead of the starch or meat

Tips for cooking:

- cook foods by baking, broiling, barbequing, boiling
- trim any fat you can see from meat
- make meals and freeze them for nights when there is no time to cook healthy meals
- use a cooking spray that is low in fat instead of oils or butter in a frying pan
- add spices instead of butter, margarine or sauces to vegetables, potatoes, rice

What if my child is hungry between meals?

Offer these filling and healthy snacks:

- sliced apple sprinkled with cinnamon
 - raw vegetables dipped in a light, low-salt dressing
 - fruit sliced in low-fat yogurt
 - low-fat cheddar cheese (less than 20% Milk fat) and melba toast crackers
 - dried fruit such as Sun-Rype Fruit to Go or Squiggles
 - dried fruit and nut snack mix such as dried cranberries or raisins and almonds or walnuts
 - sliced banana on frozen yogurt
 - unsalted pretzels or plain popcorn
 - yogurt tubes
 - applesauce
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Choose these snacks less often as they are high in fat, sugar or both:

- juice
- Kool-Aid
- Gatorade
- potato chips
- cookies
- chocolate bars
- pastries or other sweets

Can we dine out?

Yes, dining out is still ok. Ask for the food choices below.

Tips to eat healthy when dining out:

- order foods without creamy sauces, gravy or breading
 - ask that no extra salt or salty seasonings, like soy sauce be added to your child's meal
 - order baked, broiled, steamed or poached foods
 - order burgers without sauces or cheese or grilled chicken sandwiches. Skip the pickles and high salt condiments such as ketchup
 - ask that high fat items such as sausage, ham or bacon be removed from the meal before it is served
 - ask for butter, margarine, dressings and sauces on the side
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Exercise each day

Why is exercise important for my child?

Exercise:

- will keep your child's bones and muscles strong.
- helps your child to grow and develop as they should for their age
- will start an early healthy habit for your child to continue into adulthood

Your child needs to be active at least 90 minutes a day. Try a variety of activities that add up to 90 minutes a day.

- take the stairs, instead of the elevator
- play ball hockey or soccer
- turn on some music and let your child dance
- rake leaves or shovel snow with your child
- ride a bike
- go on a walk or a hike – make it an adventure
- leave the car at home when you are going on short trips
- go swimming in the summer or go skating in the winter
- play sports
- for more ideas look at Canada's Physical Activity Guide for Children and Youth, visit http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/guide/pag_ch_e.html