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## Steroids and Blood Sugars

### Steroids and blood sugar

Steroids are anti-inflammatory medicines. Examples are prednisone, dexamethasone, and hydrocortisone. Steroid pills will usually raise your blood sugar 4 to 8 hours after you take them. For example, if you take a steroid like prednisone in the morning, your blood sugar will likely increase later in the day, most commonly after lunch and before supper. Intravenous (IV) steroids will raise your blood sugars sooner.

Steroids often cause high blood sugar even in people without diabetes. The increase in blood sugar is usually temporary and will stop once you stop taking steroids. A bigger dose of steroid medicines will usually have a bigger effect on your blood sugar.

### Blood sugar monitoring

**For those with diabetes:** When you're taking steroids, you should test your blood sugar 4 times per day (before each meal and before bedtime).

**For those without known diabetes:** Ask your healthcare provider if you should test your blood sugar.

**Target blood sugar:** If you have blood sugars higher than 10 mmol/L before meals, insulin should be started or adjusted.

### Insulin adjustment for temporary high blood sugar from steroids

Starting insulin or adjusting insulin doses will be different for everyone. Tell your healthcare provider if your blood sugars are higher than 10 mmol/L before meals. You may need to start insulin temporarily to lower your blood sugar. If you're already on insulin, you may need to increase your current insulin doses.

When a bigger dose of steroids is started, long-acting insulin doses are usually increased by 10 to 20%. Meal time insulin doses at lunch and supper might be increased by 10 to 20%. Talk to your healthcare provider if you have any questions.

#### References:

♣ [http://www.diabetologists-abcd.org.uk/JBDS/JBDS\\_IP\\_Steroids.pdf](http://www.diabetologists-abcd.org.uk/JBDS/JBDS_IP_Steroids.pdf)

♣ Steroid hyperglycemia: Prevalence, early detection and therapeutic recommendations: A narrative review. Héctor Eloy Tamez-Pérez, Dania Lizet Quintanilla-Flores, René Rodríguez-Gutiérrez, José Gerardo González-González, and Alejandra Lorena TamezPeña. World J Diabetes. 2015 Jul 25;6(8): 1073–1081