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2. Dexamethasone

Dexamethasone

Generic name: dexamethasone (oral) [*dex-a-METH-a-son*e]

Brand names: [Decadron](#), DexPak 6 DayTaperpak, [Hemady](#)

Dosage forms: oral concentrate (1 mg/mL), oral liquid (0.5 mg/5 mL), oral tablet (0.5 mg; 0.75 mg; 1 mg; 1.5 mg; 2 mg; 20 mg; 4 mg; 6 mg)

Drug class: [Glucocorticoids](#)

Medically reviewed by [Sophia Entringer, PharmD](#). Last updated on Aug 23, 2023.

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What is dexamethasone?

[Dexamethasone](#) is a [corticosteroid](#) that prevents the release of substances in the body that cause inflammation.

Dexamethasone is used to treat many different inflammatory conditions such as allergic disorders and skin conditions.

Dexamethasone is also used to treat [ulcerative colitis](#), arthritis, [lupus](#), [psoriasis](#), and breathing disorders.

There are many brands and forms of dexamethasone available. Not all brands are listed on this leaflet.

Warnings

You should not use dexamethasone if you have a fungal infection anywhere in your body.

Tell your doctor about all your medical conditions, and all the medicines you are using. There are many other diseases that can be affected by steroid use, and many other medicines that can interact with steroids.

Your dosage may change if you have any unusual stress such as a serious illness, fever or infection, or if you have surgery or a medical emergency. Tell your doctor about any such situation that affects you during treatment.

Dexamethasone can weaken your immune system, making it easier for you to get an infection or worsening an infection you already have or have recently had. Tell your doctor about any illness or infection you have had within the past several weeks.

Call your doctor for preventive treatment if you are exposed to chicken pox or measles. These conditions can be serious or even fatal in people who are using steroid medication.

All vaccines may not work as well while you are taking a steroid. Do not receive a "live" vaccine while you are taking this medicine.

Do not stop using dexamethasone suddenly, or you could have unpleasant withdrawal symptoms. Talk to your doctor about how to avoid withdrawal symptoms when stopping the medication.

Before taking this medicine

You should not use dexamethasone if you are allergic to it, or if you have:

- a fungal infection anywhere in your body.

To make sure you can safely take dexamethasone, tell your doctor if you have ever had:

- liver disease (such as [cirrhosis](#));
- kidney disease;
- a thyroid disorder;
- [malaria](#);
- [tuberculosis](#);
- [osteoporosis](#);
- a muscle disorder such as [myasthenia gravis](#);
- diabetes (steroid medicine may increase glucose levels in your blood or urine);
- [glaucoma](#) or cataracts;
- herpes infection of the eyes;
- stomach ulcers, ulcerative [colitis](#), [diverticulitis](#), [inflammatory bowel disease](#);
- [depression](#) or mental illness;
- congestive [heart failure](#); or
- [high blood pressure](#).

Steroid medication affects your immune system. You may get infections more easily. Steroids can also worsen or reactivate an infection you've already had. Tell your doctor about any illness or infection you have had within the past several weeks.

It is not known whether this medicine will harm an unborn baby. Tell your doctor if you are pregnant.

You should not breastfeed while using dexamethasone.

 [Dexamethasone pregnancy and breastfeeding warnings](#) (more detail)

How should I take dexamethasone?

Take dexamethasone exactly as prescribed by your doctor. Follow all directions on your prescription label and read all medication guides or instruction sheets. Your doctor may occasionally change your dose.

Your dose needs may change due to surgery, illness, [stress](#), or a medical emergency. Tell your doctor about any such situation that affects you.

dexamethasone can affect the results of certain medical tests. Tell any doctor who treats you that you are using dexamethasone.

Do not stop using dexamethasone suddenly, or you could have unpleasant withdrawal symptoms. Ask your doctor how to

safely stop using this medicine.

In case of emergency, wear or carry medical identification to let others know you use dexamethasone.

Store at room temperature away from moisture and heat.

 [Detailed Dexamethasone dosage information](#)

What happens if I miss a dose?

Call your doctor for instructions if you miss a dose of dexamethasone.

What happens if I overdose?

Seek emergency medical attention or call the Poison Help line at 1-800-222-1222.

An overdose of dexamethasone is not expected to produce life threatening symptoms. Long term use of high doses can lead to thinning skin, easy bruising, changes in body fat (especially in your face, neck, back, and waist), increased [acne](#) or facial hair, menstrual problems, [impotence](#), or loss of interest in sex.

What should I avoid while taking dexamethasone?

Avoid being near people who are sick or have infections. Call your doctor for preventive treatment if you are exposed to chickenpox or measles. These conditions can be serious or even fatal in people who are using steroid medicine.

Avoid drinking alcohol while you are taking dexamethasone.

Do not receive a "live" vaccine while using dexamethasone. The vaccine may not work as well during this time, and may not fully protect you from disease. Live vaccines include measles, mumps, rubella (MMR), polio, rotavirus, typhoid, yellow fever, varicella (chickenpox), and zoster ([shingles](#)).

Dexamethasone side effects

Get emergency medical help if you have **signs of an allergic reaction to dexamethasone**: [hives](#); difficulty breathing; swelling of your face, lips, tongue, or throat.

Call your doctor at once if you have:

- muscle tightness, weakness, or limp feeling;
- blurred vision, tunnel vision, eye pain, or seeing halos around lights;
- shortness of breath (even with mild exertion), swelling, rapid weight gain;
- severe depression, unusual thoughts or behavior;
- a seizure (convulsions);
- bloody or tarry stools, coughing up blood;
- fast or [slow heart rate](#), weak pulse;
- **pancreatitis** - severe pain in your upper stomach spreading to your back, [nausea and vomiting](#);

- **low potassium level** - leg cramps, [constipation](#), irregular heartbeats, fluttering in your chest, increased thirst or urination, numbness or tingling; or
- **increased blood pressure** - severe [headache](#), blurred vision, pounding in your neck or ears, [anxiety](#), nosebleed.

Dexamethasone can affect growth in children. Tell your doctor if your child is not growing at a normal rate while using dexamethasone.

Common dexamethasone side effects may include:

- [fluid retention](#) (swelling in your hands or ankles);
- increased appetite;
- mood changes, trouble sleeping;
- [skin rash](#), bruising or discoloration;
- acne, increased sweating, increased hair growth;
- headache, [dizziness](#);
- [nausea](#), [vomiting](#), [upset stomach](#);
- changes in your menstrual periods; or
- changes in the shape or location of body fat (especially in your arms, legs, face, neck, breasts, and waist).

This is not a complete list of side effects and others may occur. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

 [Dexamethasone side effects](#) (more detail)

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Dupixent

Dupixent may be used to treat eczema, eosinophilic or oral-corticosteroid-dependent asthma, chronic ...

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What other drugs will affect dexamethasone?

Sometimes it is not safe to use certain medications at the same time. Some drugs can affect your blood levels of other

drugs you take, which may increase side effects or make the medications less effective.

Tell your doctor about all your current medicines. Many drugs can affect dexamethasone, especially:

- an [antibiotic](#) or antifungal medicine;
- [birth control pills](#) or hormone replacement therapy;
- [insulin](#) or diabetes medications you take by mouth;
- medicine to treat [dementia](#) or [Parkinson's disease](#);
- a **blood thinner** - [warfarin](#), [Coumadin](#), [Jantoven](#); or
- **NSAIDs (nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs)** - [aspirin](#), [ibuprofen](#) ([Advil](#), [Motrin](#)), [naproxen](#) ([Aleve](#)), [celecoxib](#), [diclofenac](#), [indomethacin](#), [meloxicam](#), and others.

This list is not complete and many other drugs may interact with dexamethasone. This includes prescription and over-the-counter medicines, [vitamins](#), and [herbal products](#). Not all possible drug interactions are listed here.

 [Dexamethasone drug interactions](#) (more detail)

Does dexamethasone interact with my other drugs?

Enter medications to view a detailed interaction report using our [Drug Interaction Checker](#).

+

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Patient resources

Other brands

[ZoDex](#), [Dexpak Taperpak](#), [Baycadron](#), [Zema Pak](#)

Professional resources

- [Dexamethasone monograph](#)
- [Dexamethasone \(FDA\)](#)
- [Dexamethasone Elixir \(FDA\)](#)
- [Dexamethasone Injection \(FDA\)](#)
- [Dexamethasone Sodium Phosphate \(FDA\)](#)
- [Dexamethasone Tablets \(FDA\)](#)

Other brands

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Related treatment guides

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- [Addison's Disease](#)
- [Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia](#)
- [Adrenocortical Insufficiency](#)

Further information

Remember, keep this and all other medicines out of the reach of children, never share your medicines with others, and use dexamethasone only for the indication prescribed.


Always consult your healthcare provider to ensure the information displayed on this page applies to your personal

circumstances.

[Medical Disclaimer](#)

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DRUG STATUS

Availability		
Rx	Prescription only	
Pregnancy & Lactation		
	Risk data available	
CSA Schedule*		
N/A	Not a controlled drug	▼
Approval History		
	Drug history at FDA	▼
WADA Class		
	Anti-Doping Classification	▼

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5.9 / 10

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