

DEXAMETHASONE (Decadron)

Type of Drug: A hormone similar to natural hormones made by your adrenal gland, decadron is a steroid that kills some types of cancer cells and increases the effectiveness of other anti-cancer medicines.

How is it Given?

- Oral (by mouth)
- Intravenous (IV) - into a vein or central line

Common Side Effects:

- Increased appetite, weight gain and fluid retention
- Full or round "moon" face (with long-term use)
- Upset stomach
- Acne
- Increased blood sugar and sugar in the urine
- Irritability and mood/behavior changes
- Less resistance to infection and longer time for healing

Less Common Side Effects:

- Increased blood pressure
- Weak bones, fractures
- Muscle weakness
- Cataracts

Note:

- Take tablet with meals, never on an empty stomach. Milk or antacids may help to decrease upset stomach.
- Appetite will be increased. Eat healthy snacks and carry snacks with you. Avoid salty foods (chips, canned foods) and this will help minimize swelling from fluid retention.
- Call your oncologist or nurse if you notice black bowel movements (a sign of bleeding), or an increase in thirst or urination (a sign of increased blood sugar or sugar in the urine).
- Do NOT stop taking this medicine suddenly, unless directed by your oncologist or nurse. This medicine is usually weaned slowly over a period of several days to weeks.