If you have any concerns always see your doctor
Sometimes people with asthma experience an acute episode and need extra corticosteroid. This time it is given by mouth and will be either prednisone tablets or liquid.
A larger dose of corticosteroids taken this way means the medicine can work faster, helping more quickly. It is best to take each dose of corticosteroid with food in the morning, usually at breakfast time. This medicine is normally taken for 3-5 days but depends on how severe the acute episode is.

Always continue with preventer medication as prescribed even when well.

For further information please contact your local asthma society

Steroids and Asthma
The importance of using corticosteroids regularly

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Asthma New Zealand-The Lung Association © October 2015
What are corticosteroids?
Corticosteroids are part of a family of substances which are produced by the body to help it function normally.

They are natural agents that prevent inflammation. The corticosteroids used to treat asthma are similar to your own naturally occurring cortisone.

Corticosteroids used in the management of asthma ARE NOT the same as the anabolic steroids that some athletes and body-builders use to build up their muscles and increase strength. Anabolic steroids can have serious side effects. Corticosteroids do not affect the liver or cause sterility.

The symptoms experienced when you or your child has asthma (such as difficulty in breathing, wheezing, coughing and waking up at night) occur because the airways that carry air into the lungs are:

- **Inflamed** – making the airways swollen and full with excess mucous.
- **Muscle surrounding the airways tightens** – making the airways narrower.

These two processes make it hard for air to move in and out of the lungs making breathing more difficult.

Corticosteroids are known as preventers because they help to prevent the inflammation.

Corticosteroids are the most effective medicine for treating inflammation in our airways.

Why inhalers?
When the medicine is inhaled it reaches the airways where the problem is, much faster. This means smaller amounts of medication can be prescribed. Compare this to medicine that is taken orally and swallowed; larger amounts are needed.

Side effects of inhaled corticosteroids are: sore throat, husky voice and thrush in the mouth. Using a spacer, rinsing mouth and brushing teeth after taking the medicine can help avoid these.

The corticosteroid medication can be found in brown or orange inhalers, plus combination inhalers, purple or red.

It is important to remember that you or your child need to take a preventer as prescribed for it to work effectively, even when they are well.

Corticosteroids may take up to 2 to 3 weeks before you notice a difference in your child’s or your asthma symptoms.

It is a hassle taking medicine every day, but it is also a hassle living with symptoms every day.

Inhaled corticosteroids are not addictive; nor will the medicine give either you or your child a weak chest.