

Limited evidence for benefits of short-course oral steroids for chronic rhinosinusitis

Clinical Question	Compared with placebo/no intervention or other pharmacological interventions (intranasal corticosteroids), how effective are short-course oral steroids for chronic rhinosinusitis?
Bottom Line	There was an improvement in disease-specific health-related quality of life and symptom severity at the end of the treatment course (two to three weeks) in patients with chronic rhinosinusitis with nasal polyps taking oral corticosteroids compared with placebo or no treatment. The quality of the evidence supporting this finding was low. At three to six months after the end of the oral steroid treatment period, there was little or no improvement in health-related quality of life or symptom severity for patients taking an initial course of oral steroids compared with placebo or no treatment. There was an increase in adverse events in people receiving oral steroids compared with placebo for gastrointestinal disturbances and insomnia but no significant impact on mood.
Caveat	All of the included studies only included adults with nasal polyps. No studies reported generic health-related quality of life or CT scan score as outcomes. The doses of oral steroids used in the trials differed (20-60 mg/day prednisone-equivalent), and the information on adverse events was incomplete. Other methodological limitations included length of follow-up, validation of outcome instruments and the small size of the studies.
Context	Chronic rhinosinusitis is a common condition involving inflammation of the lining of the nose and paranasal sinuses. It is characterised by nasal blockage and nasal discharge, facial pressure/pain and loss of sense of smell. The condition can occur with or without nasal polyps. Oral corticosteroids are used to control the inflammatory response and improve symptoms.
Cochrane Systematic Review	Head K et al. Short-course oral steroids alone for chronic rhinosinusitis. Cochrane Reviews, 2016, Issue 4. Art. No.: CD011991.DOI: 10.1002/14651858. CD011991.pub2. This review contains 8 studies involving 474 participants.
