What are corticosteroids and why are they important?

Corticosteroids reduce inflammation and may help manage CU and AD flare-ups. Available in pills, creams, and other forms, they are generally used for short periods because prolonged or improper use can cause harmful side effects.

1. Systemic Corticosteroids

These medications are **taken by mouth, often in pill form.**

Using systemic steroids for long periods of time can cause weight gain, high blood pressure, sleep or mood changes, blood sugar problems, vision changes, and other side effects.

2. Topical Corticosteroids

These steroids, available in creams and lotions, are **used on the skin and are available over-the-counter** (not needing a prescription). They should not be used frequently for a long time.

Using topical steroids for too long can cause skin thinning, bruising, redness and/or irritation, and other side effects.

What should I do if my provider suggests using corticosteroids?

When visiting your health care provider, consider asking these questions:

1. **Are there any other medications that can help my condition?**
2. **If I need to use steroids, how long should I use them for?**
3. **What side effects should I expect?**
4. **If I have taken steroids before, is it safe to use them again now?**
5. **Are there any treatments that could help me avoid using steroids in the future?**

Be sure to use your medications exactly as prescribed.
This can help to reduce and prevent flares and improve your overall health.