Corticosteroids, also called glucocorticoids, are a type of medication given to pregnant women who may deliver early.

Why They Are Given
They help to improve the outcome of babies who are born between 24 and 34 weeks gestation by:

- Speeding up lung development
- Helping to prevent fetal respiratory distress syndrome (RDS) and related problems in premature babies

How They Are Given
The medications are given to the mother by injection over 2 days. There are no long term risks for mother or baby with these medications.

How They Work
Corticosteroids help an unborn baby's lungs to produce surfactant. Surfactant lubricates the lining of the lungs. The inner surfaces of the lungs are then able to slide against one another without sticking. This makes breathing easier. When a premature baby’s lungs have begun to produce surfactant, the baby is better able to breathe on his or her own.

Talk to your doctor or nurse about any questions or concerns.