WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An oral, substantially non-aqueous liquid pharmaceutical composition comprising a corticosteroid, selected from the group consisting of budesonide, flunisolide, ciclesonide, mometasone, tixocortol, beclomethasone, and salts and esters thereof, a pharmaceutically acceptable non-aqueous liquid comprising an alcohol, oil, glycol, glycol ether, or a combination thereof, and a phase change agent comprising a cellulose derivative, a cellulose ester, an acrylate polymer, or a mixture thereof dissolved or suspended in the non-aqueous liquid, wherein after oral administration to a patient, said composition undergoes a change in physical properties of the composition upon contact with the upper gastrointestinal tract of said patient, whereby contact of the corticosteroid with the upper gastrointestinal tract of the patient is enhanced and/or prolonged, and wherein the substantially non-aqueous liquid pharmaceutical composition is anhydrous or comprises less than about 10% water .

2. The liquid pharmaceutical composition of claim 1, wherein the non-aqueous liquid comprises alcohol.

3. The liquid pharmaceutical composition of claim 2, wherein the non-aqueous liquid comprises ethanol.

4. The liquid pharmaceutical composition of claim 1, wherein after administration to a patient, said composition precipitates onto the mucosa of the gastrointestinal tract of the patient, whereby deposition of the corticosteroid onto the mucosa of the gastrointestinal tract is enhanced and/or prolonged.

5. The liquid pharmaceutical composition of claim 1, wherein after administration to a patient, said composition forms a gel on contact with the mucosa of the gastrointestinal tract of the patient, whereby the deposition of the corticosteroid onto the mucosa of the gastrointestinal tract is enhanced and/or prolonged.

6. The liquid pharmaceutical composition of claim 1, wherein after administration to a patient, said composition increases in viscosity upon contact with the mucosa of the gastrointestinal tract of the patient, whereby the residence time of the corticosteroid on the mucosa of the intestinal tract is prolonged.

7. The liquid pharmaceutical composition of claim 1, wherein said phase change agent is a poorly water-soluble polymer.

8. The liquid pharmaceutical composition of claim 1, wherein said phase change agent is a thermosensitive polymer whose aqueous viscosity increases in the range of about 15-40 °C.

9. The liquid pharmaceutical composition of claim 1, wherein said phase change agent increases in viscosity upon contact with fluids of the oropharynx.

10. The liquid pharmaceutical composition of claim 1, wherein the phase change agent comprises ethylcellulose, hydroxypropylcellulose, polyacrylic acid, or a mixture thereof.

11. The liquid pharmaceutical composition of claim 1, wherein said corticosteroid is budesonide, flunisolide, or an ester thereof.

12. The liquid pharmaceutical composition of claim 1, wherein said non-aqueous liquid is water-miscible.

13. The liquid pharmaceutical composition of claim 12, wherein the phase change agent is a cellulose derivative or a cellulose ester.

14. The liquid pharmaceutical composition of claim 13, wherein the phase change agent is ethylcellulose or hydroxypropylcellulose.

15. The liquid pharmaceutical composition of claim 13, wherein the phase change agent is ethylcellulose.

16. The liquid pharmaceutical composition of claim 9, wherein said increase in viscosity is at least 50%.

17. The liquid pharmaceutical composition of claim 9, wherein said increase in viscosity is at least 100%.

18. The liquid pharmaceutical composition of claim 9, wherein said increase in viscosity is at least 200%.

19. The liquid pharmaceutical composition of claim 1, wherein the change in physical properties occurs upon contact with the esophagus.