

What is ADRENAL INSUFFICIENCY?



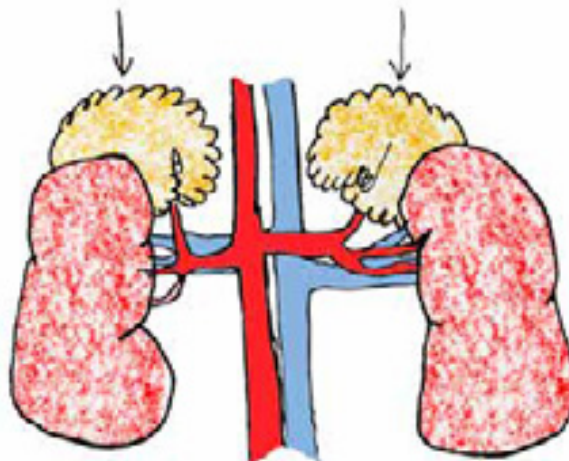
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Adrenal insufficiency is a medical condition where the body does not produce enough of a steroid called cortisol.



Cortisol is made by the adrenal glands, found on top of each kidney on either side of the body.


Adrenal Glands



Cortisol is essential for life. It controls blood sugar, weight, blood pressure, inflammation, bone health, mood and waking/sleeping.

The adrenal glands are under the control of the pituitary gland.

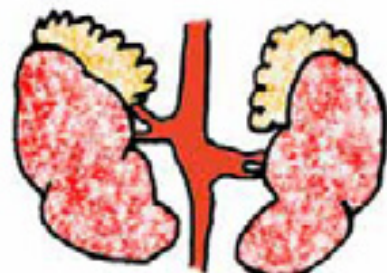


 Pituitary Gland



The pituitary gland is a pea-size gland at the base of the brain. The pituitary gland monitors the amount of cortisol in the blood.

If the amount of cortisol starts to drop too low, the pituitary gland sends a message to the adrenal glands to make more cortisol. The cortisol enters the blood and is carried around the body.



If the amount of cortisol in the blood becomes higher than needed by the body, the pituitary gland sends a message to the adrenal glands to make less cortisol.



Adrenal insufficiency happens when the adrenal glands or pituitary gland is not working properly so not enough cortisol is made!

Adrenal insufficiency can be caused by:



1.

A problem with the adrenal glands.

Infections, the immune system and genetic conditions can result in damage to the adrenal glands. The damaged adrenal glands are not able to respond to the message from the pituitary gland to make cortisol. This is called primary adrenal insufficiency.

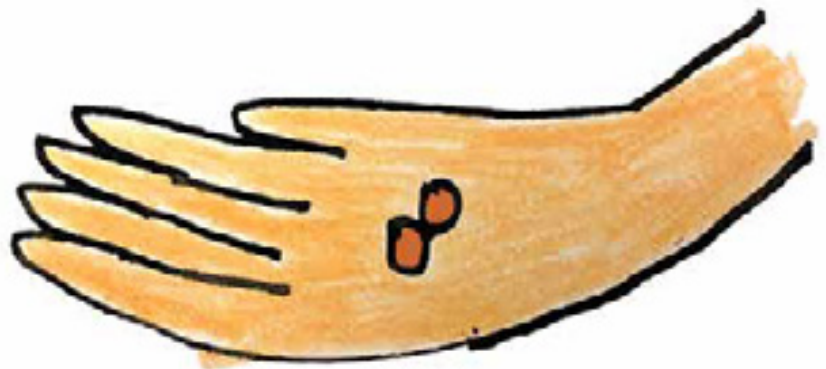
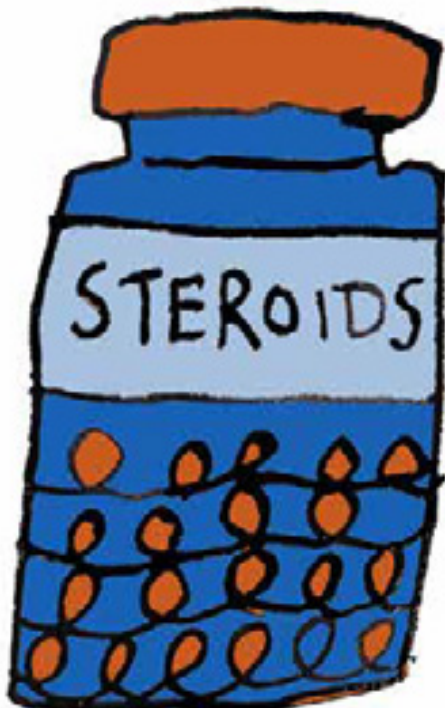
This includes Addison's disease, auto-immune adrenalitis, autoimmune polyglandular syndromes, congenital adrenal hypo- and hyperplasia and adrenoleukodystrophy.

2.

A problem with the pituitary gland.

Pituitary tumours, surgery, radiotherapy and genetic conditions can result in damage to the pituitary gland. The damaged pituitary gland is then unable to send an adequate message to the adrenal glands to produce cortisol. This is called secondary adrenal insufficiency.

People with primary and secondary adrenal insufficiency need to take steroid tablets to replace the cortisol that their body cannot produce naturally.



Taking Steroid Replacement Therapy

The aim of taking steroid replacement therapy is to copy the body's natural levels of cortisol.



Cortisol is the body's alarm clock. The cortisol level in the body slowly rises during the early hours of the morning reaching a peak at about 8am. The high level of cortisol in the morning gives our body the energy to wake up, get out of bed and get on with the day.









During the day, the cortisol level drops slowly. This is the body's signal that the day is coming to an end and needs to wind down ready for sleep. Cortisol level is at its lowest at around mid-night, so we sleep peacefully. The cortisol level then starts to rise to prepare the body for the day ahead.



Different steroid tablets are used for replacement therapy including:



-  - **Hydrocortisone** – usually taken two to three times a day
-  - **Prednisolone** – usually taken once or twice a day
-  - **Plenadren** (long-acting hydrocortisone) – once a day
-  - **Efmody** (long-acting hydrocortisone) – twice a day
-  - **Dexamethasone** – usually taken once or twice a day
-  - **Fludrocortisone** – usually taken once daily with another steroid tablet in patients with primary adrenal insufficiency

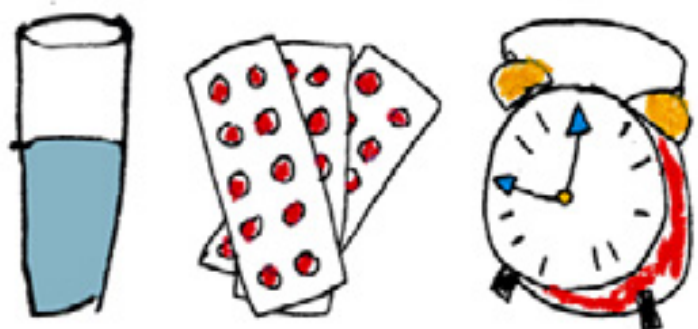
For some people, taking a steroid tablet once a day will be enough to copy the natural levels of cortisol in the blood. Others will need to take steroid tablets two or three times a day to keep the steroid levels in the blood at the right level.



To get the best effects from your steroid tablets, take your tablets:

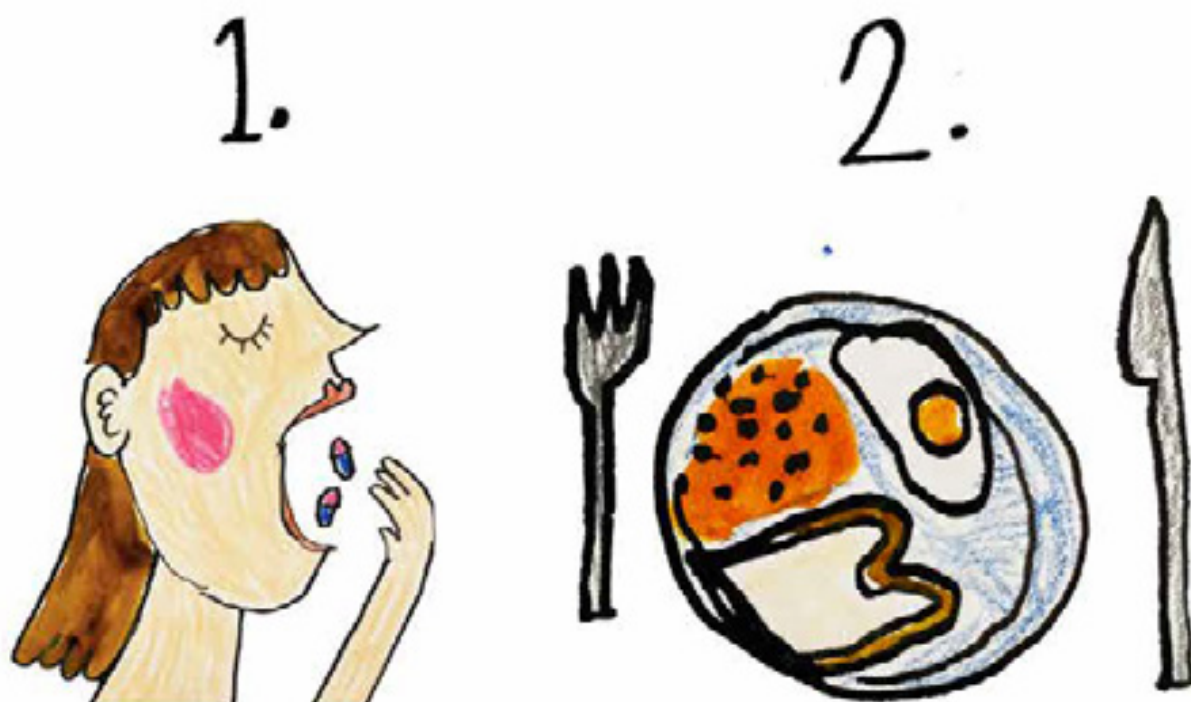
★ On waking

Have a glass of water and your tablets next to your alarm clock. Take your first dose of steroid tablets for the day when your alarm goes off.



Steroids are your body's alarm clock. Taking the steroid on waking gets your body ready for the day ahead. Often doses of steroids taken in the morning are higher than doses taken throughout the rest of the day.

Do not wait to take your steroid after breakfast. Taking the steroid after breakfast delays the time it takes the steroid to get into the blood stream and work. This will make you feel lousy.



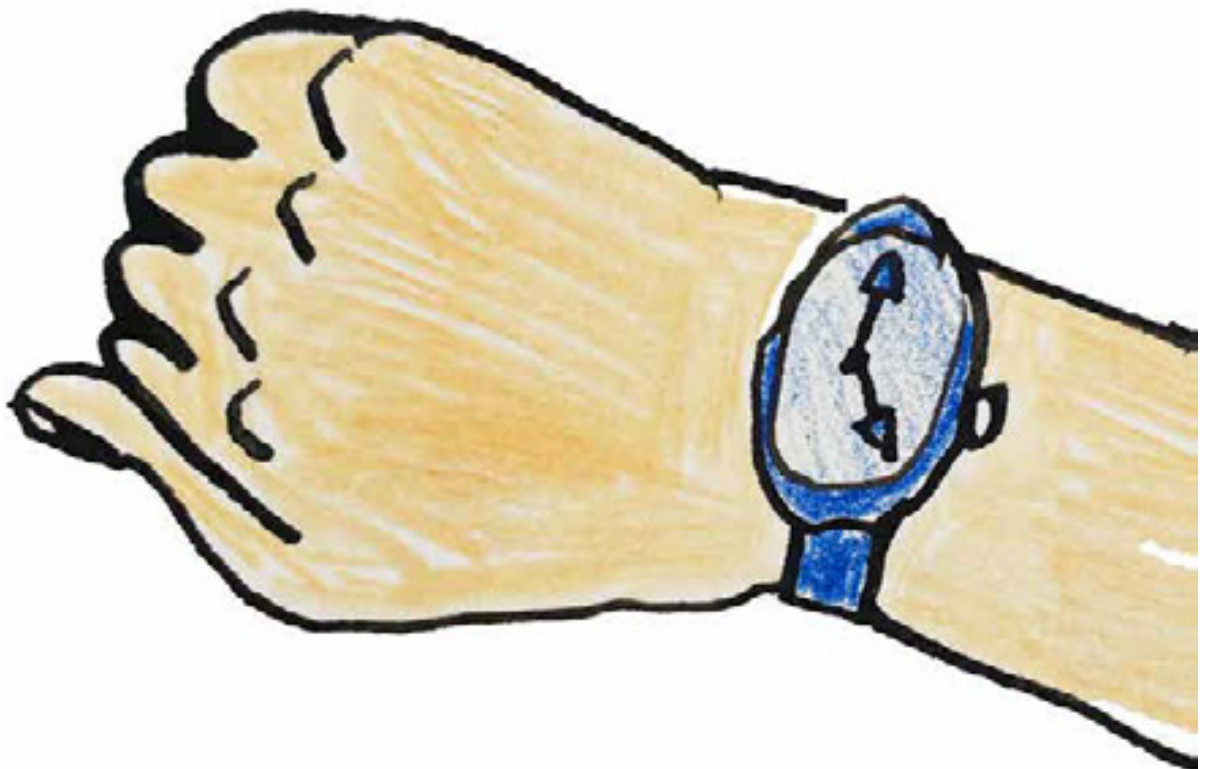
You may notice that labels on steroid packets from the chemist say to take your steroid with or after food. The doses of steroid tablets used in adrenal insufficiency are much lower than in other medical conditions. Taking your steroid tablets before food will not cause stomach problems. If you do experience indigestion, you can take your steroid tablet with milk or a milk alternative.

To get the best effects from your steroid tablets, also take your tablets:



At least four hours before bed
(unless taking Efmody)

Cortisol levels drop slowly to prepare the body for sleep. To make sure that you get peaceful sleep, make sure you take your last dose at least four hours before you go to bed. Taking your last dose of steroid tablets close to going to bed will keep you awake at night. The only exception is Efmody which is designed to release the steroid into the blood stream very slowly and so can be taken at bedtime without causing sleep problems.



It is important to take your tablets at the right time. Taking a dose too early can lead to unpleasant symptoms from too high a level of steroid in the blood. Taking the dose late or forgetting it completely can lead to symptoms of low steroid levels and even adrenal crisis.

Remembering to take your steroid tablets on-time can be difficult. Here are some tips to help you remember:



- Keep your steroid tablets for the morning with a glass of water next to your alarm clock.
- Set alarms on your mobile phone to take your tablets during the day.
- Apps can be downloaded to smart phone devices which remind you to take your tablets.
- Using a pill box with sections for different times of the day.
- A check sheet to tick off that you've taken your tablets.



Taking Steroids with Other Medicines and Supplements.

Taking other medicines with your steroid tablets can increase or decrease the effects of the steroids. Always tell doctors, nurses, pharmacists and dentists that you are taking steroid tablets. They can check whether any medicine they prescribe or recommend interferes with your steroid. They may be able to give you a different medicine or change the dose of your steroid.



Medicines that can interfere with your steroids include some antibiotics, anti-viral, anti-fungal and anti-epilepsy medicines.

Calcium supplements can slow down the absorption of steroid tablets in the stomach. If you take calcium supplements, take these at least two hours before or after your steroid tablets.



You should avoid taking anti-inflammatory painkillers like ibuprofen, naproxen and diclofenac unless your doctor says it is safe to do so. These painkillers can irritate the stomach, increasing the risk of stomach ulcers when taken with steroids.



You should avoid foods and supplements with grapefruit and liquorice root. These foods can increase the amount of steroid in your blood.



Always buy medicines from a chemist and tell the pharmacist that you are taking steroids. The pharmacist will make sure the medicine you buy is safe to take with your steroid tablets.

Side-Effects of Taking Steroid Replacement Therapy

You should not have any side-effects from taking steroid tablets. The steroid tablets are replacing what your body would naturally produce.



You may have some unpleasant symptoms if the dose of your steroid is too low or high.



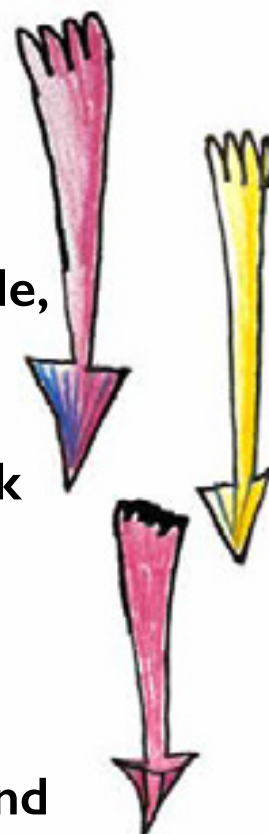
Symptoms of low steroid levels in the blood.

Sometimes people find that they have symptoms of low steroid levels just before their next dose of steroid tablets are due. This is more likely to happen if you have been more active or under more pressure than normal. The symptoms then disappear when you take your next dose of steroid tablets. If you have symptoms of low steroid levels, contact your endocrinology team and keep a diary of your symptoms. This will help your endocrinologist identify if there is a pattern and a need to change the dose of your steroid tablets.

Symptoms of low steroid levels are:

- Headache
- Joint aches
- Low blood sugar – feeling wobbly, irritable, faint, difficulty concentrating, craving for high sugar/high fat snacks
- Loss of appetite and feeling a little bit sick
- Thirsty
- Tired
- Light-headed or a little bit dizzy

Severe nausea, dizziness, vomiting and confusion are signs of seriously low steroid levels. You should use your emergency steroid injection and go to the hospital or call 999 if you have these symptoms.



Symptoms of *high* steroid levels in the blood

People experience symptoms of high steroid levels when the dose of their steroid tablets is too high. These symptoms also happen if you take extra doses of steroid when not needed.

You should only take extra doses of your steroid tablets when unwell and having procedures as instructed in the sick day rules or by your doctor.

Symptoms of high steroid levels are:

- Low mood, mood swings and anger
- Signs of water retention - puffy ankles, bloating
- Puffy round face ('moon face')
- Thin skin and easy bruising
- Brittle bones
- Weight gain - this is to be expected when you are starting your steroid treatment. If the weight gain continues, your diet is healthy and you are active, your steroid level may now be too high.
- Wasting muscles and weakness of muscles



If you have any of these symptoms, speak to your endocrinology team. Your doctor can check the steroid level in the blood to see if it is too high and change the dose of your steroid tablets. Your doctor may also give you medicines to strengthen and protect your bones whilst you are taking steroids.

Symptoms of high and low fludrocortisone in the blood

Contact your endocrinology team if you take fludrocortisone and have the following symptoms:

Symptoms of **low** fludrocortisone

- Thirsty all the time
- Heart flutters, skipped heart beats and palpitations
- Shortness of breath
- Chest pain
- Liquorice cravings



Symptoms of **high** fludrocortisone:

- Signs of water retention - puffy ankles, bloating
- Heart flutters, skipped heart beats and palpitations
- Muscle weakness







Your endocrinologist can check if the fludrocortisone is causing your symptoms and change the dose of your tablets.

Taking your Steroids at Times of Illness

Your body naturally needs more cortisol to deal with:



-  Infection
-  Sickness and stomach bugs
-  Injury
-  Surgery including dental treatment

Extra doses of your steroid medicines need to be taken to top-up the steroid levels that your body needs to deal with the bug, surgery or injury. Taking extra doses when you are unwell is known as the “Steroid Sick Day Rules.” Taking extra doses of your steroid for a short-time when unwell is not harmful. The extra doses replace what the adrenal gland would normally produce at times of illness. Follow the “Steroid Sick Day Rules” for your specific steroid medicine. It’s important that you understand the “Steroid Sick Day Rules.” If you have any questions about the “Steroid Sick Day Rules,” ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

How to prevent steroid levels from becoming too low when you are unwell...



1

Immediately start to follow the “Steroid Sick Day Rules” given to you by your doctor, nurse or pharmacist. Don’t wait for an appointment with the doctor before doing this.

2

Contact your doctor when you feel unwell. Tell them your symptoms, that you are taking steroids and that you are following the “Steroid Sick Day Rules”

3

Always have plenty of supply of your steroid medicines to take if you feel unwell and need to follow the “Steroid Sick Day Rules”

Speak to your doctor or pharmacist if you do not understand or are unsure about the “Steroid Sick Day Rules”

4

Always tell your doctor, nurse, dentist, pharmacist and other healthcare professionals before having any treatment that you take steroids. Show them your Steroid Treatment Card and Emergency Steroid Card.

5

Your endocrinology team will have supplied you with an emergency hydrocortisone (steroid) injection kit and taught you how to use the injection in an emergency.

Make sure you and your relatives/friends know how to use the hydrocortisone injection in case of an emergency.





Sick Day Rules for Adrenal Insufficiency Requiring Steroid Replacement Therapy



Follow the instructions in the table for changing the dose of your steroid medication when unwell. Doses should be changed as instructed until you feel better or complete a course of antibiotics. Once better, doses of steroids should be reduced back down to your normal dose gradually.

Illness	Hydrocortisone	Prednisolone	Plenadren (Hydrocortisone modified release)	Fludrocortisone
Mild illness - no fever (e.g. common cold etc.)	Take normal dose as usual	Take normal dose as usual	Take normal dose as usual	Take normal dose as usual
Mild infection with fever (temperature 38-39°C) Broken bone or significant injury	Double each of your usual doses throughout the day.	Double each of your usual doses throughout the day.	Switch to taking 10mg immediate release hydrocortisone every 6 hours.	If hydrocortisone has been increased to 50mg or more, stop taking fludrocortisone. Restart fludrocortisone when your hydrocortisone has been reduced to your normal dose.
Serious infection with fever (temperature above 39°C)	Take 50mg of hydrocortisone and go to hospital or call 999.	Take 20mg of prednisolone and go to hospital or call 999.	Take 50mg of immediate release hydrocortisone and go to hospital or call 999.	Take normal dose as usual
COVID-19 (suspected or confirmed)	Take 20mg every 6 hours until you feel better.	Dose change depends on the total amount of prednisolone you take daily. If you normally take a total daily amount of between 5-15mg every day - increase dose to 10mg every 12 hours. If you normally take total amount of more than 15mg each day - take your normal dose split into a minimum of 10mg every 12 hours.	Switch to taking 20mg immediate release hydrocortisone every 6 hours.	Take normal dose as usual
Vomiting and/or diarrhoea	Take extra 20mg. If you vomit again or have more diarrhoea, use your hydrocortisone injection and call 999.	Take extra 5mg. If you vomit again or have more diarrhoea, use your hydrocortisone injection and call 999.	Take extra 20mg of immediate release hydrocortisone. If you vomit again or have more diarrhoea, use your hydrocortisone injection and call 999.	Take normal dose as usual





Serious signs and symptoms



Adrenal Crisis

You will need a steroid injection if you have:

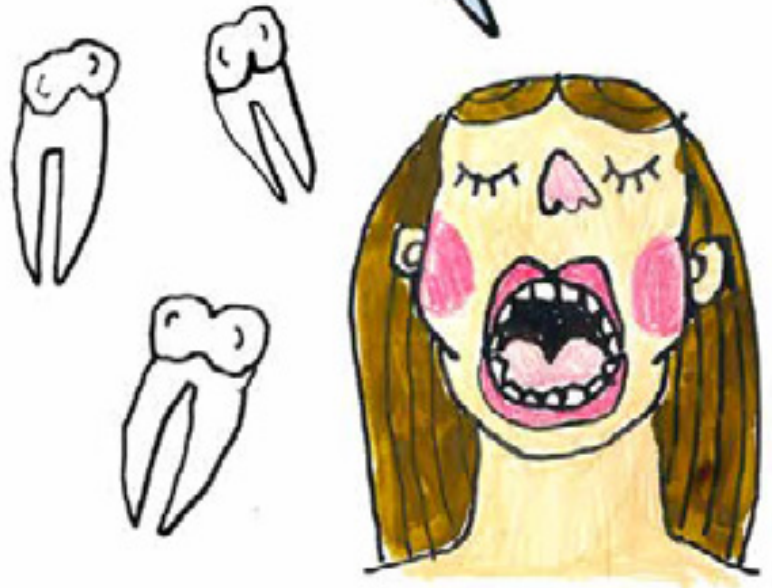
- More than one bout of vomiting and/or diarrhoea
- Injury
- No improvement of illness
- Symptoms of adrenal insufficiency/crisis:
 - Sudden pain – stomach, back, legs, muscles
 - Severe nausea and/or vomiting
 - Severe diarrhoea
 - Sweating – cold, clammy skin
 - Severe headache
 - Dizziness
 - Drowsiness
 - Confusion
 - Collapse

Go to hospital immediately or call 999 and state adrenal crisis. Show staff your Emergency Steroid Card.

Your doctor may have given you an emergency steroid injection. If so, use the injection as instructed. Still call 999 and state Adrenal Crisis. Show your emergency steroid card.

Dental Treatment, Medical Procedures and Surgery

Always tell health care staff (doctors, nurses, pharmacists, dentists, chiropractors/podiatrists etc.) that you are taking steroids.



If you need a procedure, your health care professional will give you instructions on how to take your steroid medicines before and after the procedure. The healthcare professional may also need to give you steroid injections at the time of the procedure. It is very important health care staff know that you are taking steroids so that they can plan your care.



Here are some general rules to follow if you are having a procedure:

Procedures	How to take your steroid tablets (hydrocortisone, prednisolone, Plenadren)	
	Before procedure	After procedure
Minor dental work or surgical procedure (e.g. replacement filling, scale & polish, skin mole removal etc.)	1 hour before appointment for procedure take extra dose of your regular steroid as instructed below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hydrocortisone 20mg • Prednisolone 5mg • Extra dose of Plenadren 	After treatment if you feel dizzy, drowsy, nauseous or sick, sweaty or shivery, take an extra dose of your regular steroid as instructed below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hydrocortisone 20mg • Prednisolone 5mg • Extra dose of Plenadren
Dental surgery (e.g. root canal work with local anaesthetic)	1 hour before appointment for procedure take extra dose of your regular steroid as instructed below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hydrocortisone 20mg • Prednisolone 5mg • Extra dose of Plenadren 	Take double your normal dose of steroid (hydrocortisone, prednisolone or Plenadren) for 24 hours after, then reduce to your normal dose.
Major dental surgery (e.g. tooth extraction with local or general anaesthetic)	Take your steroid tablets as normal. You will need a hydrocortisone steroid injection before the procedure. You're your hydrocortisone injection kit with you. Your dentist may ask you to self-administer the injection.	Take double your normal dose of steroid for 24 hours after, then return to your normal dose.
Bowel procedures with laxatives (e.g. magic eye of the bowel (colonoscopy), barium enema etc.)	Take your steroid tablets as normal. Doctor will give you steroid injection before and during the procedure	Take double your normal dose of steroids for 24 hours. Then return to your normal dose.
Surgery under anaesthetic	Take your steroid tablets as normal. Doctor will give you steroid injections before and during the procedure.	Your doctor will give you steroid injections until you can eat and drink. Once eating and drinking, take double your normal dose of steroid until your doctor tells you to return to your normal dose. If you take double your normal dose for 1 week after the procedure, you will need to reduce your steroid dose back down to your normal dose gradually. Your doctor will give you instructions on how to reduce your dose gradually back to your normal dose.



Having a baby whilst taking steroids

It is safe to use steroids when having a baby and breast-feeding. Steroids will not cause harm to you or the baby. Here is some general advice to follow about taking your steroids whilst having a baby:

	How to take your steroids
Positive pregnancy test	Continue to take your steroids at the normal dose. If you feel unwell, follow the "steroid sick day rules" as normal. Contact your doctor (General practitioner and hospital endocrinologist) to tell them that you are pregnant. An appointment to plan your care during pregnancy will be arranged.
During pregnancy	Unless told differently by your doctors, continue to take your steroids at the normal dose. Follow the "steroid sick day rules" if you feel unwell.
Labour and delivery	Follow the advice given to you by your doctors and midwives. At the hospital, the doctors will give you steroid injections during labour and delivery.
After delivery	
Vaginal	Take double your normal steroid dose for 48 hours after delivery then return to your normal dose.
Caesarean	Take double your normal steroid dose until your doctor tells you to return to your normal dose. If you take the double dose for a week, your doctor will need to reduce your steroid dose back to normal gradually.
Breast-feeding	Continue to take your normal dose of steroids whilst you are breast-feeding, unless told differently by your doctor.



Living with Adrenal Insufficiency: Impact of Everyday Life on Steroid Needs

People taking steroids often ask whether they need to change how they take their steroids when they are under emotional, mental and physical stress from everyday life.

Here is some general advice about taking your steroids.



Having vaccinations



Vaccinations will protect you from having or developing complications from infections. It is safe for you to have vaccines with your steroid therapy. If you have concerns about having a vaccine, speak to your doctor. If you are having a vaccine:

Take your normal dose of steroid as usual. There is no need to change your steroid dose.

If you feel unwell after having a vaccine, follow the sick day rules.

Having a body piercing, tattoo or other beauty 'special procedures' (e.g. electrolysis etc)

'Special procedures' such as piercings, tattoos and beauty therapies can cause physical stress to the body. If the 'special procedure' is invasive, affecting a sensitive area in the body, or very painful or prolonged, then you may need to increase your dose of steroids temporarily to stop your cortisol levels from dropping.

Speak to your endocrinology team if you are planning on having a body piercing, tattoo or beauty therapy. Head to the next page for some general advice.



Smaller procedures

Procedures affecting a small body considered less sensitive to pain (e.g. ear lobe piercing, arm, thigh, calf etc.)



Before procedure:

1 hour before procedure take extra dose of your regular steroid as instructed below:

Hydrocortisone 20mg

Prednisolone 5mg

Extra dose of Plenadren

Take extra steroid tablets and your hydrocortisone injection with you to your appointment.



After procedure:

Take an extra dose of your regular steroid as instructed below if you feel dizzy, drowsy, nauseous or sick, sweaty or shivery:

Hydrocortisone 20mg

Prednisolone 5mg

Extra dose of Plenadren

If there is no improvement, use your hydrocortisone injection and go to hospital or call 999.

Bigger procedures

Procedures affecting a large part of the body and/or areas sensitive to pain (e.g. genitalia, chest, head and neck etc.)

Before procedure:

1 hour before procedure take extra dose of your regular steroid as instructed below:

Hydrocortisone 20mg

Prednisolone 5mg

Extra dose of Plenadren

Take extra steroid tablets and your hydrocortisone injection with you to your appointment.



After procedure:

Take double your normal dose of steroid (hydrocortisone, prednisolone or Plenadren) for 24 hours after, then reduce to your normal dose.

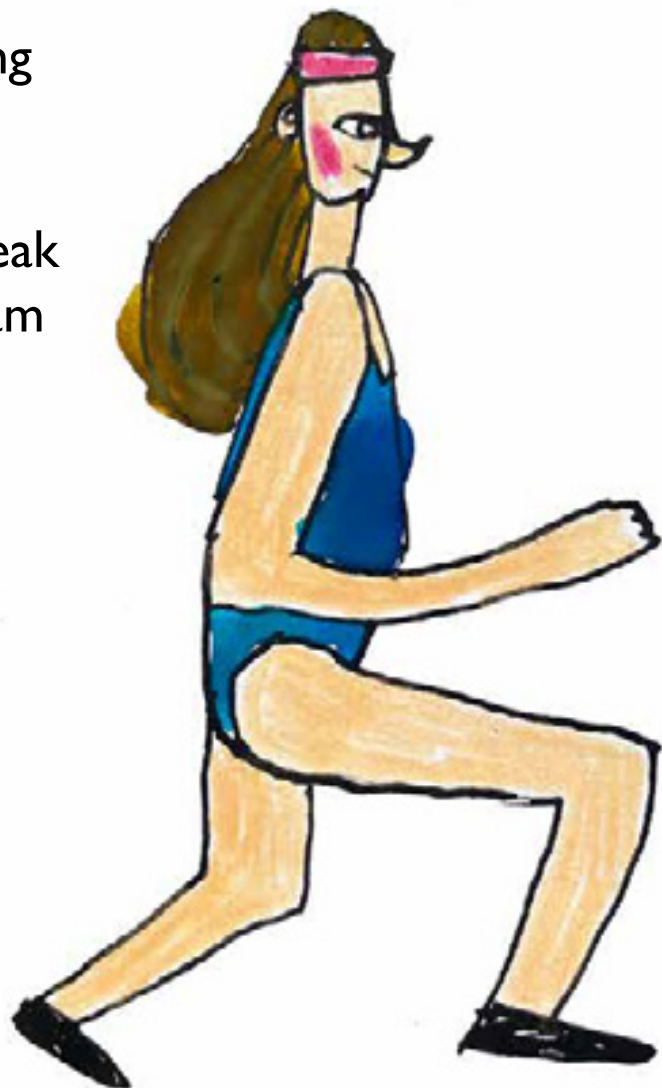
Body piercings, tattoos and other beauty procedures carry a risk of infection. Care for your piercing and tattoo as instructed by your artist to prevent infection. If you feel unwell after having a body piercing, tattoo or other beauty therapy follow the sick day rules and get advice from your doctor immediately. Use your hydrocortisone injection if you have signs or symptoms of adrenal crisis or if there is no improvement and call 999.

Everyday activities and exercise



You do not need extra steroids or fludrocortisone when carrying out activities like gardening, shopping, walking or any physical activity which is within your limits. If you are taking part in vigorous high intensity exercise beyond your normal activities, exercising for a long time (e.g. competitive marathons) or exercising in harsh weather, then you may need to change how you take your steroids to allow your body to cope with the physical stress.

General advice on adjusting your steroids when exercising is given on the next few pages. Always speak to your endocrinology team if you are planning a new exercise regime. They can give you a specific tailored plan for taking steroids.



Whenever out and about or exercising:

- Always carry your Emergency Steroid Card
- Always wear a medical alert bracelet indicating that you have adrenal insufficiency
- Always carry emergency contact details
- Always carry extra steroid tablets
- Always carry your hydrocortisone injection kit
- Always inform any instructors or event organisers that you have adrenal insufficiency and what to do if you experience symptoms of adrenal crisis
- If possible, ensure that the designated first aider at the venue or event knows how to inject the hydrocortisone.



If you feel unwell during or after exercise with symptoms of low cortisol, stop exercising and take an extra dose of your steroid. If symptoms don't improve use your hydrocortisone injection and call 999.



Duration	Low intensity (e.g. walking, gardening)	Medium intensity (e.g. jogging, badminton, tennis)	High intensity (e.g. swimming, running, weight lifting)	Competitive (e.g. marathons)
Less than 30 minutes	No change to steroid dosage	No change to steroid dosage	No change to steroid dosage	30 minutes before exercise take an extra half of your normal steroid dose
30-60 minutes	No change to steroid dosage	No change to steroid dosage	30 minutes before exercise take an extra half of your normal dose	30 minutes before exercise take an extra dose of your steroid
Between 1-6 hours	No change to steroid dosage	30 minutes before exercise take an extra half of your normal dose	30 minutes before exercise take an extra dose of your steroid	
More than 6 hours	30 minutes before exercise take an extra half of your normal dose	30 minutes before exercise take an extra dose of your steroid	30 minutes before exercise take an extra dose of your steroid. Then take double dose of your steroid at your usual time until the race finishes. If you normally take fludrocortisone, take one extra dose of after every 6 hours of exercise.	



Stress and pressures of life

Your normal dose of steroids will be enough to allow your body to cope with the pressures and stress of everyday life. It is perfectly normal to feel sick before an interview, to feel tired after a hard day at work or have a headache after being in a noisy shopping centre. Don't assume that these symptoms are a sign that your cortisol level is dropping. You may feel better once the interview is over, you've put your feet up or gone somewhere quieter.



Traumatic events (e.g. sudden death of a close relative or friend) may cause a shock. If you find you experience signs and symptoms that your cortisol level is low after a stressful event or news, you may want to increase your steroid dose temporarily to deal with the trauma. For example, taking an extra 2.5mg to 5mg hydrocortisone at your normal times or extra dose of prednisolone or plenadren at your usual time of taking.

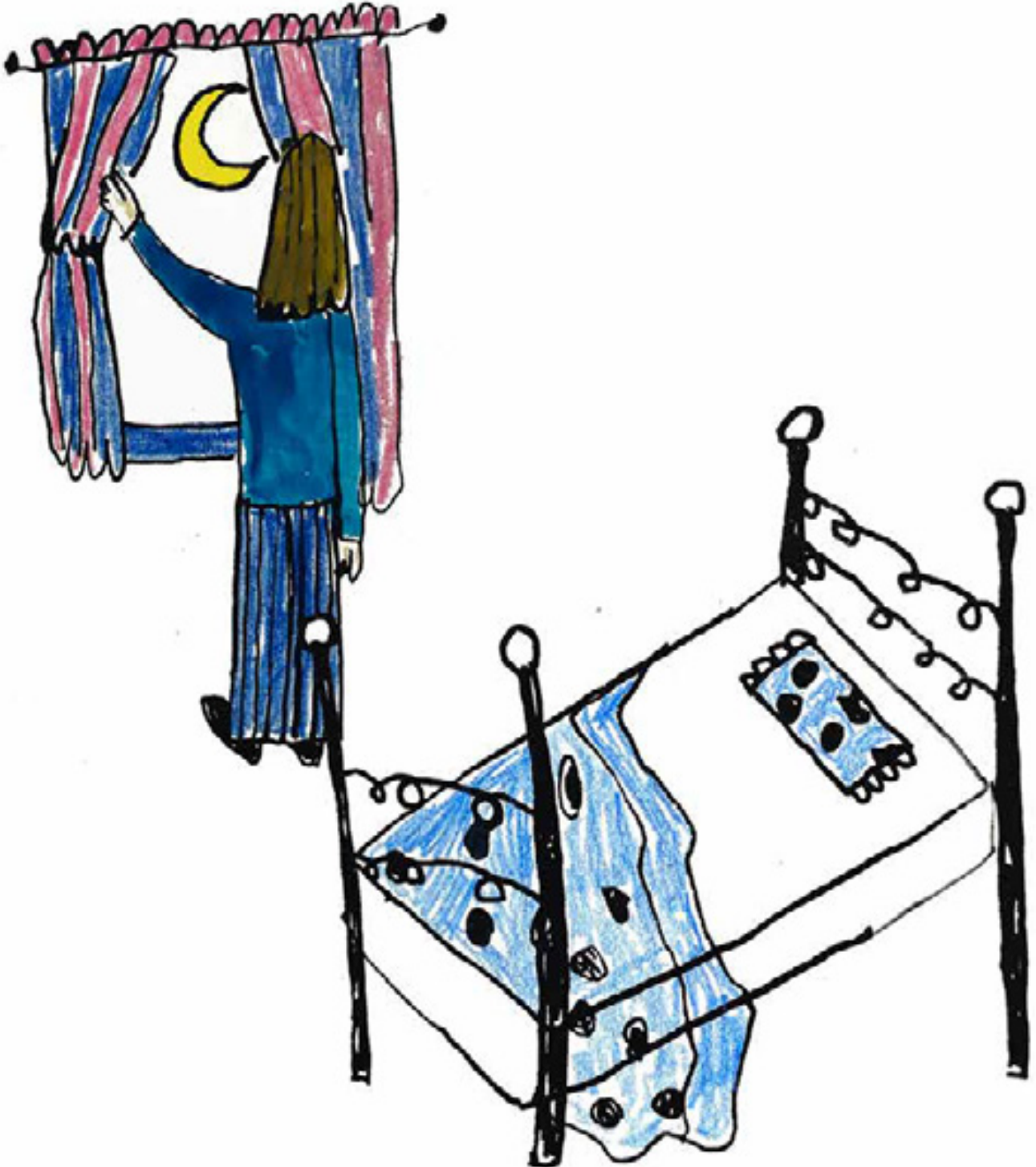


If your symptoms of low cortisol are severe and consistent with adrenal crisis, use your hydrocortisone injection.

Shift Work



Take your steroids to suit your daily routine. The first dose should always be taken on getting up from sleep, even if this is not in the morning.



Fasting



If you are planning to fast, you **must** contact your endocrinology team about 4 to 8 weeks before starting. Your endocrinology team can assess whether it is safe for you to fast and advise on an appropriate plan. This may involve switching to a once daily preparation of your steroid tablets which you can take at dawn. Before starting the fast you must make sure your hydrocortisone steroid injection is in-date, have an Emergency Steroid Card and have a copy of the sick day rules plan.

Here are the steps you must take if you become unwell when fasting and/or experience signs and symptoms of adrenal crisis:

- 1** Stop fasting immediately.
- 2** Take double your dose of steroid tablets, if you are not vomiting or if you are vomiting, use your hydrocortisone injection.
- 3** Go to hospital or call 999.

Do not fast again if you have experienced signs and symptoms of adrenal crisis.

Do not fast if your endocrinology team have told you that it is not safe for you to fast.

You are exempt from religious fasting if there is a risk to your health. If it is not safe for you to fast, you can feed the poor (fidyah) instead. The Imam or religious scholar at your place of worship or hospital can give you more information.



Home and Away Travelling with Adrenal Insufficiency and Steroid Replacement Therapy

You can enjoy getting out and about and going holiday at home or abroad. It is perfectly safe for you to go travelling and stay healthy whilst away from home.

Getting out and about

- ➔ Always carry some steroid tablets with you. This will stop you from missing a regular dose of your medicine. If you feel unwell when out, you can also take extra doses as described in the sick day rules.
- ➔ Always carry a hydrocortisone injection kit with you.
- ➔ Always carry your Steroid Treatment Card and Emergency Steroid Card.
- ➔ Wear a medical identification bracelet. These can be bought online from charities that support people with adrenal insufficiency and other businesses.



➔ If you have a smart phone, use the Medical ID functionality on your phone or download an app to indicate that you have adrenal insufficiency.

➔ Consider putting an Emergency Steroid Card with an attached passport photo on your car dashboard. In the event of an accident, emergency services will know that you need steroid injections urgently if unwell or injured. Special adrenal insufficiency seat belt covers can be bought online too.

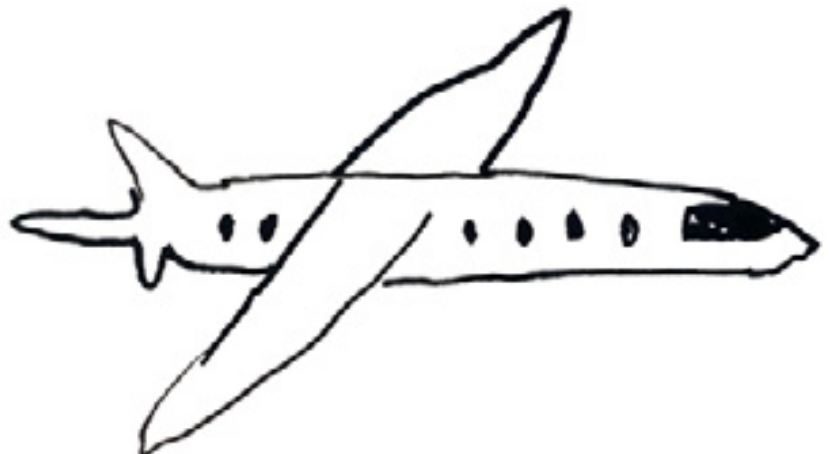
➔ Carry a bottle of water with you to stay hydrated and to take your tablets if needed.



Before going on holiday

➔ Arrange supplies of your medicines and check that your steroid injection kit is within date. You will need to take at least double the quantity of steroid tablets that you would normally use during the time that you are away. Take two steroid injection kits if travelling abroad. You will then have spare medication should you become unwell and need to follow the sick day rules.

➔ Allow plenty of time to get supplies of medicines and any documents about your medicines from your doctors. Your endocrinology team will need about 6-8 weeks' notice if they need to provide a letter for the airport and/or insurance company authorising you to carry medicines, needles and syringes for your adrenal insufficiency. Your GP and community pharmacy will need at least two weeks' notice to provide prescription for any extra supplies of your medicines you need to take on holiday.



➔ If you take fludrocortisone, check with your endocrinology team if you need to increase your dose of fludrocortisone if you are heading to a hot country (temperatures 30°C or higher).








➔ Buy any necessary remedies for travelling such as oral rehydration sachets, paracetamol, sunscreen, first aid kit, insect repellent etc. Your pharmacist will be able to advise what products to take.

➔ Make sure you have in-date travel insurance which covers your medical conditions.








➔ Check whether you need any vaccinations or special medicines (e.g. anti-malaria tablets) for your destination. Arrange to have these vaccinations and treatments with your GP or pharmacy.



Packing for your holiday

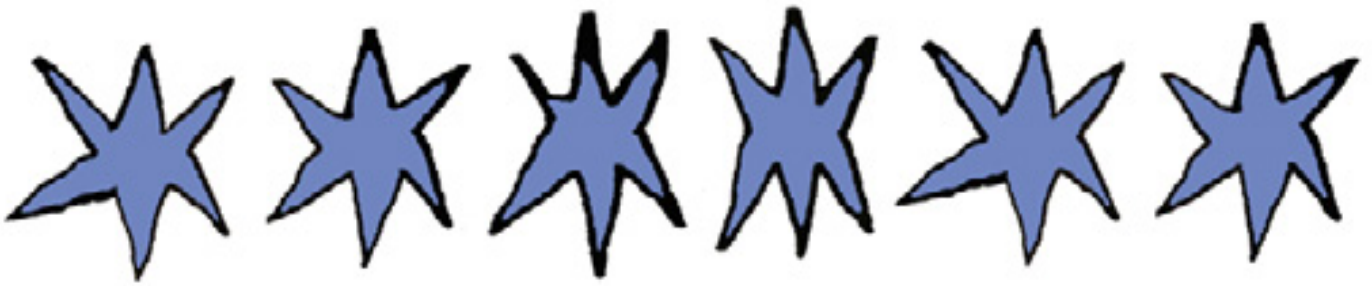
-  Pack your medication in your hand luggage. You may wish to put spare medication in your suitcase too. Should your hand luggage or your suitcase be lost or stolen, you will have supplies of your steroid medication.
-  Pack your steroid injection kit in your hand luggage.
-  Carry your Steroid Treatment Card and Emergency Steroid Card on your person.
-  Have your medical letters and/or any translations authorising you to carry your medication, needles and syringes in your hand luggage ready to show at airport check-in and security.
-  Have your travel insurance details in your hand luggage.
-  Make sure you have a copy of the steroid sick day rules or your medical care plan in your hand luggage.
-  Wear your medical alert bracelet.

On holiday

-  Follow the instructions for getting out and about.
-  Carry any medical letters and/or translations of these letters with you.
-  Take oral rehydration sachets with you. If you feel dehydrated, add to your water as instructed on the packet and sip throughout the day.
-  To avoid getting an upset tummy, drink bottled water abroad and peel fruit and vegetables.
-  Make sure not to burn. Use sunscreen (SPF=30+, UVA rating=4*+). Reapply frequently and after swimming.
-  Cover up with light clothing and wear sunglasses and a hat.
-  Stay in the shade during the hottest parts of the day (between 11am and 3pm).

Most importantly enjoy!





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