

Adrenal Crisis: Signs & Symptoms

5 Signs and Symptoms (5Ss) of Adrenal Crisis:

- S**udden pain – abdomen, back, legs
- S**yncope
- S**hock – confusion, altered consciousness, cold and clammy skin, rapid respiratory rate, fast heart rate
- S**uper low blood pressure
- S**evere nausea, vomiting, headache and weakness

Biochemical Markers

- Hyponatraemia
- Hypoglycaemia
- Hypercalcaemia
- Normocytic anaemia
- Acute kidney injury
- Hyperkalaemia (primary adrenal insufficiency)

Management of Adrenal Crisis

Do not delay – start treatment immediately

Monitoring necessary:

- Cardiac monitoring
- Blood pressure
- Fluid balance
- Electrolytes

100mg hydrocortisone by IV or IM injection followed by 24 hour infusion of 200mg hydrocortisone in glucose 5%

Or

50mg hydrocortisone IV or IM every 6 hours (100mg hydrocortisone if severely obese)

Provided no hyponatraemia, commence rapid rehydration with IV sodium chloride 0.9%:

- Rapid rehydration with 500ml bolus of IV sodium chloride over 15minutes and then replacement of any electrolyte deficits
- Rehydration (3 – 4 litres of IV sodium chloride 0.9% over 24 hours) with careful monitoring of fluid and electrolyte balance.
- Drinking ad libitum

Liaise with endocrinology and refer for assessment and ongoing management of adrenal insufficiency