

## Guidelines for Patients on steroid replacement therapy

(Hydrocortisone, Prednisolone & Dexamethasone)

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**It is absolutely essential that you take your steroid tablets regularly and that you do not forget or run out of tablets. If you have vomited after taking your steroid tablets, take the same dose of steroid straightway.**

### Sick day rules

**If you are being sick and cannot keep your tablets down you will need to get an emergency intramuscular injection of 100 mg hydrocortisone to stop you from getting very unwell. In this situation, please call for urgent medical help from your GP or go to your local A&E.**

When your body is under stress due to illness, your adrenal glands, unlike normal glands, may be unable to increase their production of steroid hormones. You may get any of these warning symptoms – dizziness, abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting or weakness. You will need extra doses of steroid to counter this.

#### 1. Mild Illness (severe cold or fever)

You will need to double the dose of your regular steroids for 2-3 days. For example, if you are taking 10 mg in the morning, 5 mg in the afternoon and 5 mg in the evening, you will need to increase this to 20 mg in the morning, 10 mg in the afternoon and 10 mg in the evening. If you have a more severe chest infection or are on antibiotics, continue doubling your dose for longer until you improve. Do not double your dose for more than 7 days without consulting your doctor.

#### 2. Major surgery or major dental work requiring general anaesthesia

At the start of the procedure, a hydrocortisone injection will be given to you. If you are unable to eat and drink, six hourly injections of hydrocortisone in hospital may be needed.

Once you start eating and drinking, you will need to double your daily dose for two to three days afterwards.

#### 3. Minor surgery or Endoscopy or Labour

At the start of the procedure, a hydrocortisone injection will be given to you and then you will need to double your daily dose of steroids for 24 hours afterwards.

#### 4. Minor dental work e.g. root canal work with local anaesthesia

Double your usual dose for 24 hours – starting with the first dose at least an hour before the procedure. A minor procedure e.g. replacing a filling, does not normally need top-up steroids.

**Please carry a blue steroid card on you at all times to alert medical personnel that you are on steroids, in case you become unwell.**

**It is strongly advised that you obtain a warning bracelet as well e.g.**

MedicAlert Foundation Free phone 01908 951045 [www.medicalert.org.uk](http://www.medicalert.org.uk)

Travel When travelling abroad, it is a good idea to carry extra steroid tablets.



If you need an interpreter or a person to sign, please let us know.

**If you require a large print version, contact PALS on 01493 453240**