

To A&E and hospital ward staff – Adrenal Insufficiency patient

Your patient has a condition called secondary **Adrenal Insufficiency**, which they take hydrocortisone for, and which is part of their pituitary condition. The information below is vital for their care. **Hydrocortisone is a steroid hormone produced by the adrenal gland. It plays a complex role in regulating body functions and is essential for survival.** A good majority of people with pituitary disease have to take replacement hydrocortisone daily, as they don't produce this naturally. Therefore, as they take replacements, they don't have the natural surge of cortisol if they become acutely ill, are vomiting or have severe shock.



In stressful situations, an emergency hydrocortisone injection is vital! (The patient might have their own emergency 100mg hydrocortisone injection with them). **This injection may be needed to save the patient's life. If this injection is delayed, the patient can become very ill, very quickly. Blood pressure drops and coma can occur.**

How does the patient take hydrocortisone?

The usual dose for hydrocortisone is 15-20mg by mouth, split over two or three times daily, and depending on their individual endocrinologist's recommendations. For example: 10mg before getting out of bed in the morning, 5mg at mid-day and 5mg no later than 6pm. Hydrocortisone should ideally be taken with water. The usual dose for prednisolone is 5-7mg by mouth, split over

two times daily.

Instructions for hospital ward staff

If patient is in severe shock, trauma, or has vomited, they will **urgently** need to have either a 100mg intramuscular injection of hydrocortisone or 100mg IV hydrocortisone. Please check their blood pressure, U&Es, glucose and other relevant tests. **Please alert surgeon and anaesthetist to this information pre-operatively.**

PLEASE CONTACT THE ENDOCRINOLOGIST ON-CALL WITHOUT DELAY

- **Look** for their medic alert – necklace or bracelet
- **Read** their steroid care card or their Pituitary Foundation **Patient Care Card**
- **Listen** to the patient's family who will know about the patients emergency cortisol needs

The
● Pituitary
Foundation
For hormones • For health • For life

www.pituitary.org.uk
Helpline 0117 370 1320