



Emergency pack for children with cortisol deficiency

This emergency pack contains one of each of the following:

- Vial of hydrocortisone sodium succinate (Solu Cortef®) 100mg for injection and 10mL water for injection
- *How to give an injection of Solu-cortef® (hydrocortisone sodium succinate)* information booklet
- Tube of fast acting glucose (dextrose) gel for rubbing into gums or cheek
- Cotton wool ball
- Alcohol wipe
- Syringe
- Needle

Please check the expiry dates regularly. Ask for a replacement prescription from your doctor before the expiry date. Do not wait until you need to give an injection to check the expiry date.



Further information about hydrocortisone for injection

The following information describes hydrocortisone sodium succinate for injection, how it is given and some of its possible side effects. Each person reacts differently to medicines so your child will not necessarily suffer every side effect mentioned. If you have any questions or concerns, please ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist or telephone one of the contact numbers below.

What is hydrocortisone sodium succinate?

Hydrocortisone sodium succinate is a corticosteroid (steroid). Steroids are hormonal substances that are produced naturally in the body by the adrenal glands (which are just above each kidney) and by the reproductive organs. There are many different types of steroids and they have different effects on the body. They are different to the anabolic steroids used by athletes to enhance their performance.

Hydrocortisone sodium succinate is used to treat children who have cortisol deficiency. Cortisol deficiency occurs when the adrenal glands do not produce enough cortisol. Cortisol deficiency is easily controlled with replacement therapy as hydrocortisone tablets given several times a day. However, if a person with cortisol deficiency becomes unwell, they are unable to increase the production of cortisol in their system to help the body cope and this could be life threatening. In these circumstances, the amount of hydrocortisone given needs to be increased quickly, either by increasing



the number of tablets taken or by giving an injection. At Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH), the brand of hydrocortisone sodium succinate used is Solu-cortef®. This information describes the injection only. More information about cortisol deficiency is available in our *Cortisol deficiency and steroid replacement therapy* leaflet.

How is it given?

It is given as an injection into the muscle (intramuscularly). The injection needs to be made up with water for injection before it is given. For instructions on giving intramuscular injections of hydrocortisone, please see the enclosed leaflet *How to give an emergency injection of Solu-cortef®*. Information for families. You must always telephone 999 for an ambulance, stating that the child is having an 'adrenal crisis', if they have had a hydrocortisone injection.

Who should not use Solu-cortef® injections?

People with the following conditions should discuss using hydrocortisone with their doctor:

- Known hypersensitivity to Solu-cortef®, hydrocortisone or any of its ingredients.

What are the side effects of Solu-cortef®?

Allergic reaction – Some children receiving Solu-cortef® may have an allergic reaction to the drug. This reaction may be mild to severe. Signs of a mild allergic reaction include skin rashes and itching, high temperature, shivering, redness of the face, a feeling of dizziness or a headache. If you see any of these signs, please report them to a doctor or nurse.

Signs of a severe allergic reaction include any of the above, as well as shortness of breath or chest pain. If you are in hospital and your child shows signs of a severe allergic reaction, call a doctor or nurse immediately. If you are at home and your child shows signs of a

severe allergic reaction, call an ambulance immediately. If your child has a severe reaction to Solu-cortef®, the subsequent treatment will probably be changed.

Other side effects are likely to be related to your child's everyday steroid treatment. For information about these side effects and how they will be monitored, please see our *Long term steroid treatment* information sheet.

Hydrocortisone and other medicines

Some medicines react with hydrocortisone, altering how well it works, although this is unlikely when hydrocortisone is given as an emergency dose. However, always check with your doctor or pharmacist before giving your child any other medicines, including herbal or complementary medicines.

Further information about glucose gel

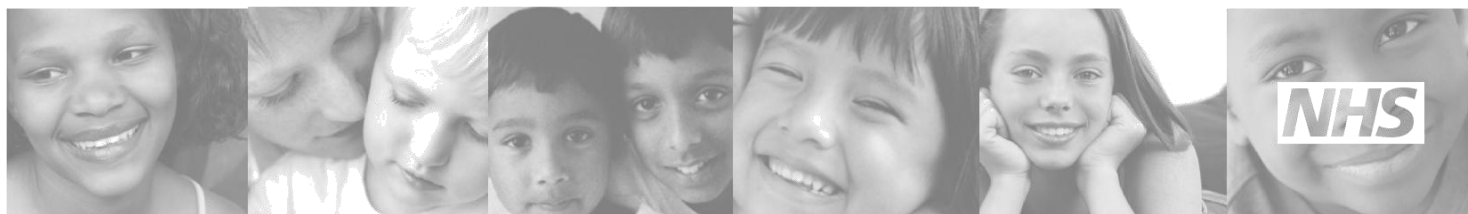
Glucose (dextrose) gel can be used when your child is showing signs of low blood sugar levels. It should always be used **in addition to** giving the hydrocortisone injections.

How to use glucose gel after your child has had the hydrocortisone injection

Gradually squirt the glucose gel into the side of your child's mouth, between the gums and the cheek. Alternatively, squirt the gel onto your fingertip and apply it between your child's gums and cheek. Up to one-third of a 25g tube may be needed.

- Massage your child's cheek to allow the gel to be absorbed
- This should raise your child's blood sugar level within 10 minutes
- Telephone 999 for an ambulance, stating that your child is having an 'adrenal crisis'.





Important information

- Keep the entire emergency pack together, in a safe place where children cannot reach it. Keep it at room temperature, out of direct sunlight or heat. The injection vials do not need to be kept in the fridge. Remember to check the expiry date of the pack before your hospital appointment so you can order a replacement if needed.
- If your doctor decides to stop treatment with hydrocortisone, return any unused ampoules to the pharmacist. Do not flush them down the toilet or throw them away.

Useful numbers

GOSH switchboard – 020 7405 9200

Pharmacy Medicines Information
– 020 7829 8608 Monday to Friday
from 9am to 5pm

GOSH Endocrine Clinical Nurse
Specialists – 020 7813 8214

Out of hours – call switchboard and
ask to speak to the On-call doctor for
Endocrinology

UCLH Endocrine Clinical Nurse
Specialists – 0845 155 5000 ext. 9204

Out of hours – call 0845 155 5000 and
ask to speak to the On-call doctor for
Paediatric Endocrinology

Notes



Compiled by the Pharmacy & Endocrinology Departments
in collaboration with the Child and Family Information Group

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