

## Adrenocorticoid Medication Instructions

NAME(S): **Dexamethasone** (Decadron)  
**Hydrocortisone** (Cortef, Hydrocortone Acetate, Solu-Cortef)  
**Methylprednisolone** (Solu-Medrol)  
**Prednisone**  
**Triamcinolone** (Artisocort, Kenalog)

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ MD: \_\_\_\_\_

PATIENT: \_\_\_\_\_

MEDICATION NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

DOSE/TIMES: \_\_\_\_\_

STRESS DOSE: \_\_\_\_\_

INJECTABLE MEDICATION/DOSE: \_\_\_\_\_

### PURPOSE OF THIS MEDICATION:

Cortisol is a chemical messenger that helps your body respond to stress and maintain good health. If your child does not produce enough cortisol, he/she will need to take glucocorticoid medication to replace this hormone. During stress or illness the body makes more cortisol; that is why it is necessary to increase the amount of medication given during these times. Take this medication as directed. This medication works best when there is a constant amount in the blood stream. Your health care professional will instruct you on how to do this. (Refer to cortisol dependent instructions.)

Glucocorticoid medications can also be used to provide relief for inflamed areas of the body. They reduce swelling, redness, itching, and allergic reactions. They are often used as part of the treatment for conditions such as severe allergies or skin problems, asthma, arthritis, some kidney diseases, cancer, or to prevent loss of transplanted organs. Larger doses of glucocorticoids are used for these conditions and may increase the risk of side effects. When used for these purposes check with your child's health care professional prior to receiving immunizations.

### STORAGE:

- Store away from heat and direct light. Do not store in damp places.
- Avoid freezing.

- If the medication is a liquid, shake well before giving.
- **Keep this and all medication out of the reach of children. Do not share this medication with others. Discard all outdated and unused medication.**

#### **PRECAUTIONS WHILE USING THIS MEDICATION:**

- Tell your health care professional about any unusual or allergic reactions to any medications, foods preservatives or dyes.
- Check with your health care professional before beginning any new medication or if any new medical problems develop while your child is taking this medication.
- Children who require this medication for hormone replacement treatment should wear a medical alert bracelet or carry a medical alert identification card at all times.
- It is very important that your health care professional check your child's progress at regular visits. Regular blood tests may be necessary. Inform all health care professionals that care for your child, that he/she is taking this medication. This is particularly important if your child is:
  - **Having skin tests.**
  - **Having surgery (including dental surgery) or emergency treatment.**
  - **Suffering from a serious infection or injury.**
  - **Receiving immunizations.**

#### **POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS OF THIS MEDICATION:**

Refer to the package insert for a complete list of possible side effects.

Check with your child's health care professional if any of the following effects occur, it may be an indication that the dose needs to be adjusted:

- Excessive weight gain
- Growth failure
- Mood swings
- Acne
- Abnormal hair growth

If this medication needs to be stopped it may be gradually tapered as instructed by your health care professional. The body may need time to adjust. Call your health care professional as soon as possible if any of the following symptoms occur. These symptoms may be a sign that the body does not have enough cortisol.

- Abdominal, stomach, or back pain
- Fever
- Nausea, vomiting or weight loss
- Muscle or joint pain
- Fainting
- Shortness of breath
- Reappearance of disease symptoms

#### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

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*This information is provided as a service of the Pediatric Endocrinology Nursing Society (PENS). It is for use as an educational aid & does not cover all information about your child's diagnosis and treatment. Please further consult with your child's health care professional regarding precautions, contraindications, possible side effects and plan of care.*