

What are "Sick day Rules?"

When you become unwell your body should produce more steroid to help you cope with this. For a person on steroid replacement this is done by increasing the amount of steroid taken. Your body will also produce more steroid if you have a stressful incident such as an accident or dental work. Some patients say that an emotional shock or an interview can make them feel unwell so they take an extra steroid dose.

As you are now requiring steroid replacement you will have to learn when to increase your steroid dose. The following is a guideline:

- Cough/cold: If a simple "runny nose" increase will not be required.
- Temperature: If you have a high temperature this suggests an infection. Double your steroid dose until your temperature is back to normal.
- Antibiotics: Take double dose of steroids for the duration of the antibiotic course.
- Dental: check up: no increase required.
- Dental treatment: Double dose for 24 hours.
- Minor surgery at GP practice: double dose for 24 hours.
- Nausea and diarrhoea: Hydrocortisone needs to be in the stomach for at least 30 min to have an effect. If you are so ill that you cannot keep your tablets down, you need a glucocorticoid injection. Seek urgent medical attention.

What if I miss a dose?

You should carry on with the next dose as normal for that day. Do not take an extra dose to make up for any that you miss.

What are the side effects of steroids?

The side effects are minimal in replacement doses, because the amount being taken is about the same the body produces naturally.

Who do I call if I am unsure of dose adjustments?

During the week you can contact the Endocrine Consultant on call via the switchboard at the hospital. On weekends you can talk to the Medical Registrar on call, also via the switchboard. It is always advisable to seek medical advice if you are unsure or not feeling well.

Your replacement dose is:

Hydrocortisone _____ at 8am
Hydrocortisone _____ at 12pm
Hydrocortisone _____ at 4 pm



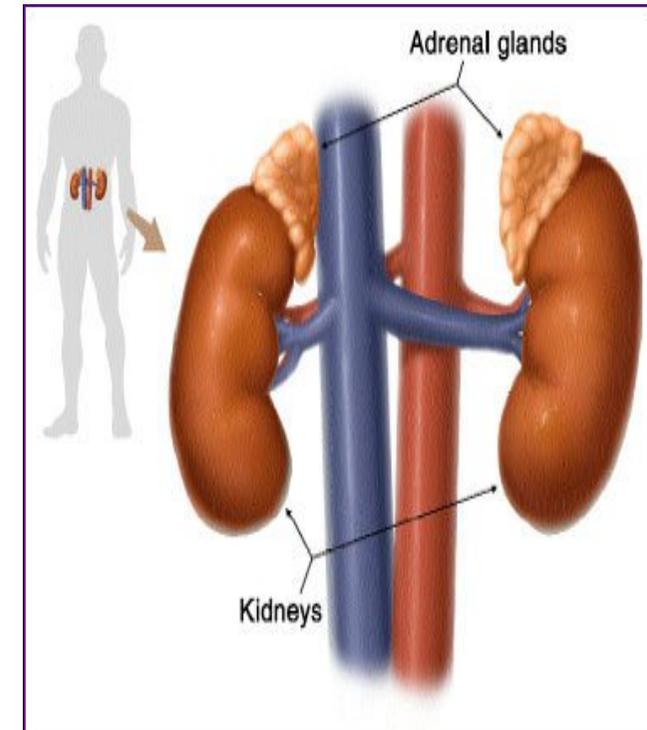
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Information Brochure: Adrenal Insufficiency



My doctor says I have Adrenal Insufficiency

What are the Adrenal Glands?

The body has two adrenal glands. They are located directly above the kidneys. The function of the adrenal glands are to secrete hormones needed for the body's normal functioning. Two of the most important hormones are known as cortisol and aldosterone. People with adrenal insufficiency do not have enough of these hormones.

Cortisol helps the body to use sugar and protein for energy and enables the body to recover from infections and stresses (for example surgery, illness).

Aldosterone maintains the right amount of salt, potassium and water in the body.

What is Adrenal Insufficiency?

Adrenal insufficiency means that there are not enough adrenal hormones. Without the right amount of these hormones, your body cannot maintain essential life functions.

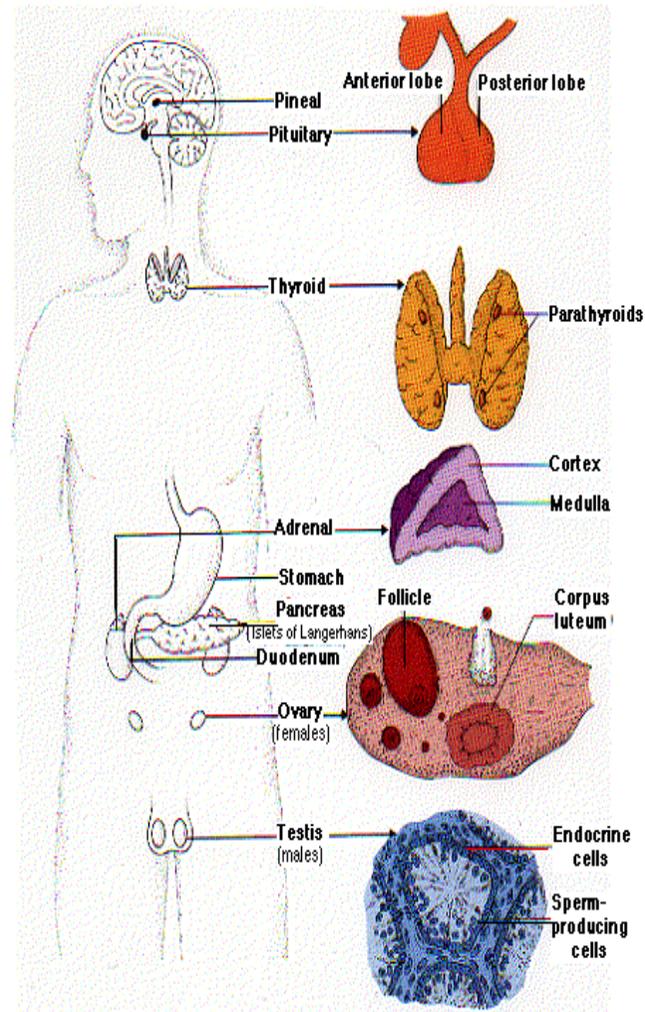
Adrenal insufficiency may be temporary or permanent. When AI is permanent, medication must be taken daily for the rest of the person's life.

Causes of Permanent AI include:

- Addison's Disease
- Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia
- Complete surgical removal of the pituitary gland
- Complete surgical removal of the adrenals

Temporary AI can be caused by:

- Transphenoidal surgery for Cushing's Disease
- Removal of an adrenal tumor that makes too much cortisol
- Medical treatment for Cushing's with drugs that lower cortisol levels
- Medical treatment with steroids for a long period of time.



What are the signs and symptoms of adrenal insufficiency?

When your essential life functions are not being maintained because of a lack of adrenal hormones, you will not feel well. Your symptoms include:

- Unusual tiredness and weakness
- Dizziness when standing up
- Nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea
- Loss of appetite
- Stomach ache

What medication is used to treat AI?

To keep your AI under control, you must take medication daily to replace the missing hormones. This medication is in a tablet form and must be taken in the amounts and at the time prescribed by your doctor. This medication is often referred to as your "replacement dose". The drugs that are used imitate the normal action of cortisol. They are called glucocorticoids. Hydrocortisone is most often used, but sometimes cortisone acetate or prednisolone can be used. If your body cannot maintain the correct fluid and salt balance, you will also be given a drug called fludrocortisone. (Florinef). This drug replaces the hormone called aldosterone.



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