

QUICK SUMMARY PAGE



MEDICATION

- A combination of hydrocortisone and fludrocortisone is the most usual treatment for Addison's disease.
- A variety of blood tests are available to help you and your doctors establish your correct baseline dosage.
- You may feel better splitting your daily hydrocortisone medication into three divided doses.

- Taking the first dose of the day on waking is recommended.
- Individual doses of 20mg or less do not usually need to be taken with food.
- The last dose should be taken no later than 4 hours before bedtime.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT

- Have your own injection kit, anti-nausea tablets (or suppositories) and sufficient extra medication to cover a period of illness with you at home.
- Make sure you and your partner or a regular companion know how to give an emergency injection of hydrocortisone.
- If you have any doubts as to the severity of your illness, ring your doctor and ask for their advice.
- The following conditions generally require you to double your normal daily dose:

- Fever of more than 37.5° Celsius (99.5° Fahrenheit)
- Diarrhoea lasting more than 24 hours

- Gradually taper your steroid dose back down to your normal daily dose when you no longer need to double it.

- The following conditions may require an emergency injection and intravenous fluids. Seek medical advice promptly in these cases:

- Severe vomiting
- Shock

- Surgery generally requires extra steroid cover. Make sure you discuss your adrenal condition and the amount of extra steroid cover you will need beforehand with your surgeon or anaesthetist.

- Wear a MedicAlert tag.

- Crisis management means crisis avoidance whenever possible. Be prepared and be quick to seek help.

- Remember to have a flu vaccination every autumn.

- If you are unlucky enough to go into crisis and there is any uncertainty as to the treatment you need, insist on 100mg hydrocortisone by vein every 6–8 hours.

“I have lived with Addison's disease for 17 years. There is no question that the illness has its drawbacks: the need to take daily medication, the loss of energy and vitality and infrequent bouts of symptoms tantamount to crisis. In my case, the worst symptoms usually occur by my own lack of discipline in taking the medication when I should. But the illness has also brought about some very positive things. I look at life differently. I have more tolerance for people's infirmities than I did when I was 'well'. I have accepted the fact that life is short and that we are to make the most of every day - every moment. Life is better than when I was well, because I appreciate it more.”

LUKE