

# **Fludrocortisone (for Addison's Disease)**

Medication Information Leaflet

## **What is this medication for?**

Fludrocortisone is a corticosteroid and is used to replace the steroid hormone that your body lacks. Corticosteroids are medications which act in the same way as steroid hormones and are used to replace the body's own production when the adrenal glands (that produces steroid hormones) are not working normally.

Fludrocortisone is used to treat Addison's disease, which is a long-term condition where your body does not make enough steroid hormones.

## **How should I take/use this medication?**

- Do not stop taking your medication without checking with your healthcare professional.
- Take this medication with or after food to prevent stomach upset.

## **What should I do if I forget to take/use this medication?**

If you forget to take a dose, take it as soon as you remember. Then take your next dose at the usual time. Do not take two doses to make up for the missed dose.

## What precautions should I take?

Before starting on this medication, inform your doctor if you:

- Are allergic to this medication or any of the other ingredients of this medication
- Have plans to become pregnant, are pregnant or breastfeeding
- Have tuberculosis (a type of lung infection) or other infections
- Have stomach ulcer
- Have severe depression (feeling extremely sad, having low mood), mood swings or are unable to sleep
- Have epilepsy (fits)
- Have diabetes
- Have water retention issues
- Have high blood pressure
- Have kidney, liver, thyroid, or heart problems
- Have osteoporosis, a condition where you have brittle or weak bones
- Have any form of cancer
- Have glaucoma, a type of eye condition linked to increased pressure in the eye
- Are going to undergo any kind of surgery, have skin tests, or have a serious infection or injury

If you come into contact with anyone who has an infectious disease such as chickenpox, shingles or measles, please see your doctor as soon as possible. Fludrocortisone decreases your body's natural immune response and you may be at higher risk of getting these diseases.

Talk to your doctor before getting any vaccinations.

## **What are some common side-effects of this medication?**

Some possible side effects may include:

- Water retention, increase in weight
- Changes in your body's salt level
- Increase in blood pressure
- Muscle weakness or feeling tired (if you have been using the medication for a long period of time)
- Stomach discomfort
- Headache
- Getting bruised more easily

Please inform your doctor if you experience any of these side effects.

Please see your doctor if you notice changes in your mood, such as having low mood or depression, moodswing (frequently changing emotions) or feeling anxious while you are taking this medication.

## **What are some rare but serious side-effects that I need to seek medical advice immediately?**

The symptoms of a drug allergy include one or more of the following:

- Swollen face/eyes/lips/tongue
- Difficulty in breathing
- Itchy skin rashes over your whole body

Other rare but serious effects that may occur include:

- Signs of infection like fever, chills, sore throat, mouth sores, or wounds that will not heal
- Signs of high blood sugar, like feeling confused, feeling tired, feeling thirsty more easily, feeling hungry more easily, passing urine more often, flushing or fast breathing
- Severe abdominal or stomach pains
- Swelling, warmth, numbness, change of skin colour, or pain in a leg or arm
- Change in eyesight or vision
- Bone pain or fractures
- Unusual bruising or bleeding, including black tarry or bloody stools or vomiting

If you experience any of these symptoms, you should stop your medication and see your healthcare professional immediately.

## **What food or medication should I avoid when I take this medication?**

Please inform your doctor if you are taking any of the following medications, before you start taking fludrocortisone:

- Aspirin
- Certain medications for pain such as Ibuprofen, Diclofenac, Naproxen
- Oral medications to treat fungal infection
- Medications to thin your blood such as Warfarin
- Oral hormone pills
- Medications used to reduce the activity of your body's immune system such as Cyclosporin or Tacrolimus

Inform your healthcare professional if you are taking or intend to take any other medications, supplements, traditional medications or herbal remedies.

## **How should I store this medication?**

Keep this medication in the original container or packaging, tightly closed or sealed in the refrigerator, between 2 to 8°C, away from direct sunlight.

The tablets can be left at room temperature (25°C) for up to 30 days. If you have left this medication at room temperature for more than 30 days, you should throw the medication away.

Keep the medication out of reach of children.

## How should I throw away this medication safely?

Pack this medication into a black trash bag and seal it tightly before throwing into the rubbish chute or bin.

### Disclaimers

If you take more than the recommended dose, please seek medical advice immediately. The information provided on this page does not replace information from your healthcare professional. Please consult your healthcare professional for more information.

*This article is jointly developed by members of the National Medication Information workgroup. The workgroup consists of cluster partners (National Healthcare Group, National University Health System and SingHealth), community pharmacies (Guardian, Unity and Watsons) and Pharmaceutical Society of Singapore.*

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