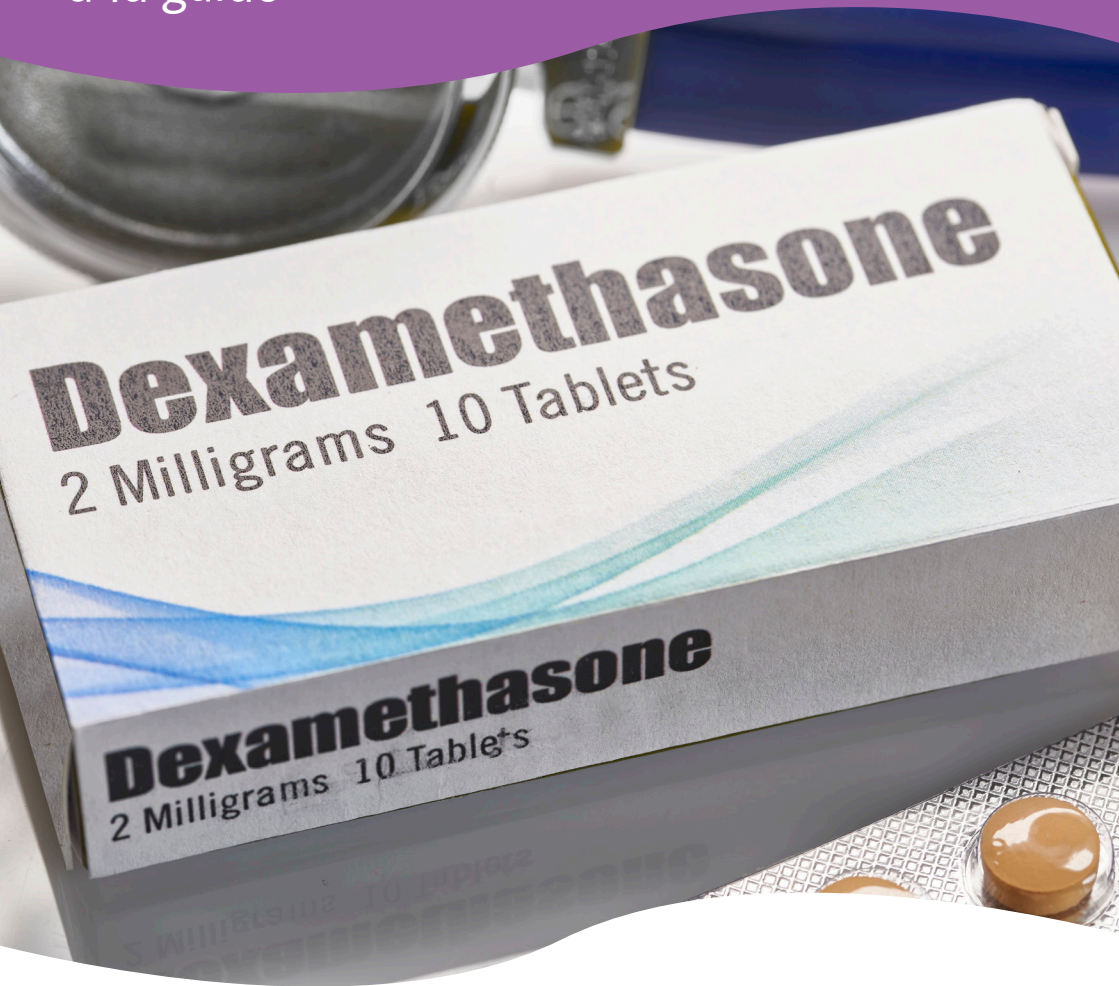


Patient Steroid Information

A practical explanation
and guide



0113 218 5500

www.st-gemma.co.uk

What is a corticosteroid and what are they used for?

Dexamethasone and Prednisolone belong to a group of medicines called corticosteroids (often called steroids).

Steroids occur naturally in the body and help to maintain health and well-being. Boosting your body with extra steroids is often an effective way to treat inflammation, as well as other problems such as poor appetite and fatigue.

The doctors and nurses at St Gemma's Hospice regularly prescribe steroids to help manage patients' symptoms.

Before I start taking my medicine

Please discuss with your prescriber if:

- ♥ you have had a previous allergic reaction to steroids
- ♥ you have an untreated infection
- ♥ you have diabetes
- ♥ you have been in recent contact with anyone who has chickenpox, shingles or measles
- ♥ you have had a previous stomach ulcer
- ♥ you have a history of depression or mental illness

Please tell the person prescribing if you are taking any medicines obtained without a prescription.



Before I start taking my medicine

Dexamethasone tablets should be swallowed whole or dissolved in a little water if this is easier for you. Please take your medication each morning with food, as taking it later in the day might affect your sleep pattern. Prednisolone tablets should be swallowed whole and taken each morning with food. Do not chew or cut these tablets.

It is very important that you take this medicine each day, to ensure you gain maximum benefit. It is also very important that you don't stop taking this medicine without seeking advice from a pharmacist, doctor or nurse prescriber first, as stopping the medication suddenly may make you more poorly.





If you develop symptoms of allergy – puffy face, swollen tongue or body, sudden onset or worsening shortness of breath, stop taking your tablets and seek immediate advice from your doctor.

If you have been prescribed steroids by the St Gemma's Hospice team, please see the back of this leaflet for details of the dose prescribed for you and when you should take it. The dose of this medicine will be reviewed each week.

What side effects may I expect?

Like all medicines, steroids can cause side effects. To reduce the incidence of side effects we will give you the smallest dose possible, for the shortest possible time, to treat your problem effectively.

The most likely side effects you may experience include:

-  Irritation of your stomach causing discomfort and possible heartburn
-  Increased appetite
-  Increased thirst and volume of urine passed which may be a sign of increased blood sugars
-  Sleep disruption

- ♥ Being more open to infection
- ♥ Possible muscle weakness, particularly in the legs and arms
- ♥ Changes in your mood. This is more likely to happen at high doses and will usually go away if the dose is lowered or stopped

If you notice any of these side effects, please contact the team at St Gemma's Hospice.

What should I do if I am unable to swallow my medicine?

You should contact the person who prescribed it for you, or the St Gemma's Hospice team. They may decide you no longer need to take the medicine. Alternatively, they may arrange for you to have the medicine as an injection.

If I have any other questions, who should I contact?

The best person to contact is the team who prescribed your steroids for you.

St Gemma's Hospice is open 24 hours a day for advice. Between 8.30am and 5pm please ring 0113 218 5540. Outside these hours, please ring 0113 218 5511.




Steroid Emergency Card



If you have been taking steroids for more than three weeks, or you require frequent short doses of steroid medication, you will be given a Steroid Emergency Card.

**Steroid Emergency Card
(Adult)**



IMPORTANT MEDICAL INFORMATION FOR HEALTHCARE STAFF
THIS PATIENT IS PHYSICALLY DEPENDENT ON DAILY STEROID THERAPY as a critical medicine, to be given/taken as prescribed and never omitted or discontinued; missed doses, illness or surgery can result in adrenal crisis which requires emergency treatment.

Patients not on daily steroid therapy may also require emergency treatment, see reverse of card for links to further information.

Name.....

Date of Birth NHS Number

Why steroid prescribed

Emergency Contact


If calling 999/111 describe symptoms (vomiting, diarrhoea etc) AND emphasise this is a likely Addison's/adrenal emergency or crisis

Emergency treatment of adrenal crisis

1) EITHER 100mg Hydrocortisone per i.v. or i.m. injection followed by 24 hr continuous i.v. infusion of 200mg Hydrocortisone in Glucose 5%
OR 50mg Hydrocortisone i.v. or i.m. qds (100mg if severely obese)

2) Rapid rehydration with Sodium Chloride 0.9%

3) Liaise with endocrinology team



Scan here for further information or search
<https://www.endocrinology.org/adrenal-crisis>



Please always carry this leaflet and emergency steroid card with you and show it to any healthcare professional who is looking after you or prescribing medication for you. You must continue to do this for a year after you have stopped taking steroids.



If you are ill with a high temperature or infection your steroid dose may need to be altered. Please contact the team who prescribed the steroids or your GP for advice.



If you have never had chickenpox, you should avoid close contact with people who have chickenpox or shingles. If you do come into contact with chickenpox, see your GP urgently.



Always make sure that the information on the card is kept up to date.

Steroid dosage instructions

Name	
Date of Birth	
NHS Number	
Drug Name and Formulation	
Reason for Prescription	
Prescribed by	

Date	Drug Strength	Dose	Review Date	Will Be Reviewed By



329 Harrogate Road, Moortown, Leeds, LS17 6QD

Main Switchboard: 0113 218 5500

Out of hours: 0113 218 5511



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