Hydrocortisone Tablets

PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET

This medicine is called Hydrocortisone 10 mg tablets but will be referred to as Hydrocortisone tablets throughout this leaflet.

This leaflet contains important information about Hydrocortisone Tablets.

Read this leaflet carefully before you start taking this medicine.

Keep this leaflet. You may need to read it again.

If you have further questions, please ask your doctor or your pharmacist.

This medicine has been prescribed for you personally and you should not pass it on to others. It may harm them, even if their symptoms are the same as yours.

If any of the side effects get serious, or if you notice any side effects not listed in this leaflet, please tell your doctor or pharmacist.

- Hydrocortisone tablets are a steroid medicine, prescribed for a number of different conditions, including serious illnesses
- You need to take it exactly as prescribed to get the maximum benefit
- Don’t stop taking this medicine without talking to your doctor — you may need to reduce the dose gradually
- Hydrocortisone Tablets can cause side effects in some people (read ‘Possible side effects’ section below). Some problems such as mood changes (feeling depressed, or ‘high’), or stomach problems can take a long time to go away. If you feel unwell in any way, keep taking your tablets, but see your doctor straight away.
- Some side effects only happen after weeks or months. These include weakness of arms and legs, or developing a rounded face (read ‘Possible side effects’ section for more information)
- If you take it for more than 3 weeks, you will get a blue ‘steroid card’: always keep it with you and show it to any medical staff if you are on it
- Keep away from people who have chicken-pox or shingles, if you have never had them. They could affect you severely. If you come into contact with someone who has chicken-pox or shingles, see your doctor straight away.

Now read the rest of this leaflet. It includes other important information on the safe and effective use of this medicine that might be especially important for you.

In this leaflet:

1) WHAT HYDROCORTISONE TABLETS ARE AND WHAT THEY ARE USED FOR

- Hydrocortisone Tablets contain a medicine called hydrocortisone. This belongs to a group of medicines called ‘steroids’. Their full name is corticosteroids. These corticosteroids occur naturally in the body, and help to maintain health and well-being. Boosting your body with extra corticosteroids (such as Hydrocortisone Tablets) is an effective way to treat various illnesses involving inflammation in the body.
- Hydrocortisone Tablets reduce this inflammation, which could otherwise go on making your condition worse. You must take this medicine regularly to get maximum benefit from it.
- Hydrocortisone Tablets are:
  - adding hydrocortisone usually made naturally in the body because part of the adrenal gland is not working properly
  - adding hydrocortisone after injuries, surgery or other stressful events
  - some other types of illness.

Ask your doctor to explain why you have been given Hydrocortisone Tablets if you are unsure.

2) BEFORE TAKING HYDROCORTISONE TABLETS

Before you take Hydrocortisone Tablets

Check with your doctor first if:

- You have ever had severe depression or mania depression (bipolar disorder). This includes having had depression before or while taking steroid medicines like Hydrocortisone Tablets.
- Any of your close family members have had these illnesses. If either of these applies to you, talk to a doctor before taking Hydrocortisone Tablets.

Do not take Hydrocortisone Tablets if you:

- are allergic (hypersensitive) to hydrocortisone or any of the other ingredients of this medicine
- have had an allergic reaction to any other medicines
- have thrush, candida or any other fungal infection.

If you are not sure talk to your doctor or pharmacist before taking Hydrocortisone Tablets.

Take special care with Hydrocortisone Tablets

Check with your doctor before taking this medicine if:

- you have recently had a heart attack
- you have a heart condition called congestive heart disease
- you have septicemia, tuberculosis (TB) or have had it in the past
- you have a stomach ulcer or other digestive problem
- you have chicken pox or shingles
- you come in contact with people who have chicken pox or shingles, especially if you have not already had these illnesses or are not sure if you have had them

- you have a herpetic infection in the eye called ocular herpes simplex
- you had muscle weakness after taking steroids in the past
- you have recently visited a tropical country
- you have bowel problems such as ulcerative colitis or inflammatory bowel disease
- you have thrombophlebitis (swelling and redness along a vein which is extremely tender when touched)
- you have exanthematous disease (disease affecting the skin, rash)
- you have metastatic carcinoma (cancer that has spread from one part of the body to another)
- you are taking Hydrocortisone Tablets for a long time increases your chance of getting infections
- you are taking medicines used to thin the blood such as warfarin
- you have a heart condition called ‘glomerous nephritis’
- you have had a heart attack
- you have had a heart murmur
- you have swelling of the joints
- you have high blood pressure
- you have liver problems
- you have recently had a heart attack
- you have recently been diagnosed with cancer
- you have had a heart attack

Mental Problems while taking Hydrocortisone Tablets

Mental problems can happen while taking steroids like Hydrocortisone Tablets (see also section 4 Possible Side Effects). These include:

- These illnesses can be serious.
- Usually they start within a few days or weeks of starting the medicine.
- They are more likely to happen at high doses.
- Most of these problems go away if the dose is lowered or the medicine is stopped.
- However, if problems do happen they might need treatment.

Talk to a doctor if you (or someone taking this medicine), shows any signs of mental problems. This is particularly important if you are depressed, or might be thinking about suicide. In a few cases, mental problems have happened when doses are being lowered or stopped.

Taking other medicines

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking or have recently taken any other medicines including those obtained without a prescription. This includes herbal medicines. This is because Hydrocortisone Tablets can affect the way some medicines work. Also, some other medicines can affect the way Hydrocortisone Tablets work.

In particular do not take this medicine and tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking any of the following:

- aspirin
- medicines for fits (epilepsy) such as phenytoin, phenobarbital, carbamazepine and primidone
- cough and cold medicines that contain a decongestant called ephedrine
- medicines used for TB (tuberculosis) called rifabutin or rifampicin
- medicines used to thin the blood such as warfarin
- water tablets (diuretics)
- some medicines for fungal infections such as amphotericin and ketoconazole
- a medicine for cancer called amingluudithemide
- some medicines for heart failure such as digoxin, furosemide or bumetanide
- a medicine used for some infections called erythromycin
- some contraceptive pills and hormone replacement therapy (HRT)
- a type of growth hormone called somatropin
- some medicines for high blood pressure
- some medicines for heart disease such as guanethidine, isosorbide mononitrate, isosorbide dinitrate and theophylline
- medicines sometimes used for asthma, low blood pressure or in cough and cold remedies called sympathomimetics
- calcium supplements
- medicines used to treat pain and inflammation called NSAIDs such as ibuprofen, diclofenac or naproxen
- a medicine for urea cycle disorder called sodium phenylbutyrate (usually started by a specialist doctor or consultant)
- medicines for diabetes.
- ritonavir (a medicine used in the treatment of HIV infections)
- medicines used for medicines used to treat rheumatoid arthritis
- Ciclosporin (a medicine used for psoriasis or in patients who have organ transplants)
- minoxidil & hydralazine (used for antihypertensive)

If you are not sure if any of the above apply to you, talk to your doctor or pharmacist before taking Hydrocortisone Tablets.

Hydrocortisone Tablets and infections

Infections are easier to get and harder to spot while you are taking Hydrocortisone Tablets.

Stay away from anyone you know with:

- chickenpox
- shingles
- measles

See your doctor if you think you may have picked up an infection.

Pregnancy and breast-feeding

Talk to your doctor before taking this medicine if you are pregnant, might become pregnant or are breastfeeding.
Driving and using machines
Stereoids may cause a feeling of movement, even while you are still and this can cause you to feel dizzy (vertigo). Changes in your eyesight or muscle weakness may also happen. If you are affected you should not drive or operate machinery.

Taking Hydrocortisone Tablets with food and drink
Hydrocortisone Tablets can be taken with or without food.

Having vaccines or tests while you are taking Hydrocortisone Tablets
Tell your doctor that you are taking Hydrocortisone Tablets if you are to receive any vaccinations or have any diagnostic or laboratory tests. This is because steroids can affect the results of some tests.

Having surgery while you are taking Hydrocortisone Tablets
If you are having surgery requiring an anaesthetic tell your doctor that you are taking Hydrocortisone Tablets.

Information you should carry while you are taking Hydrocortisone Tablets
If you are taking Hydrocortisone Tablets, get a steroid card from your pharmacist, and carry it with you. It shows what you are taking and who your doctor is in case of an emergency.

If you have an accident, fall ill or see a different doctor while taking Hydrocortisone Tablets, show them your steroid card or, tell whoever treats you that you are taking Hydrocortisone Tablets, because your dose may need to be changed.

Important information about some of the ingredients of Hydrocortisone Tablets
Hydrocortisone Tablets contain lactose, which is a type of sugar. If you have been told by your doctor that you cannot tolerate or digest some sugars (have an intolerance to some sugars), talk to your doctor before taking this medicine.

The usual doses of Hydrocortisone Tablets are:
- Adults 10 mg tablets: 30 mg a day
  - Sometimes it is taken with 4 to 6 g of salt (sodium chloride) or 50 to 300 micrograms of fluorocortisone.
- Children 10 mg tablets: 0.4 to 0.8 mg a day, for every kilogram of your child’s weight in two or three separate doses.
  - Children will be prescribed the lowest possible dose.
  - Your doctor will keep an eye on their growth and development.

If you take more Hydrocortisone Tablets than you should
If you take too many tablets by mistake, contact your doctor as soon as possible.

If you forget to take Hydrocortisone Tablets
If you forget to take your dose, skip the missed dose. Do not take a double dose to make up for a forgotten dose.

If you are thinking about stopping or have recently been told to stop Hydrocortisone Tablets
It is important to reduce your dose of Hydrocortisone Tablets too quickly. Stopping Hydrocortisone Tablets may leave you without enough steroid hormones in your body. This may cause withdrawal symptoms such as:
- pains in muscles or joints
- fever
- general discomfort.

Your doctor or pharmacist will give you advice on how to reduce the number of tablets you take if you need to do this.

If you have any further questions on the use of this product, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

4) POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS
Like all medicines, Hydrocortisone Tablets can cause side effects, although not everybody gets them. People taking steroids to replace similar naturally occurring hormones, should be less likely to get side effects than, people taking steroids for other illnesses. Your doctor will want to see you now and then to look out for these effects.

Tell your doctor straight away if you notice any of these problems, or if you think this is a side effect of this medicine (e.g. you have been in contact with someone who has an infection):
- An allergic reaction such as skin rash, swelling of the face or wheezing.
- Irregular or very fast or slow pulse, faintness.
- Muscle cramps or spasms or painful sensation in the muscles.
- Pseudotumour cerebri in children (raised pressure within the brain, indicated by headaches, listlessness and loss of consciousness); this usually occurs after treatment is stopped.
- Nausea, vomiting.
- Burst or bleeding ulcers (indicated by stomach pain especially if it seems to spread to your back, bleeding from the back passage, black stools or vomiting with blood in the vomit).
- Acute pancreatitis (abdominal pain, possibly accompanied by shock, i.e. low blood pressure with decreased output of urine and often loss of consciousness).
- A worsening of sight.
- Thrombosis (a blood clot in a vein or leg, symptoms of which are a swollen, red, hot, tender muscle).
- Thromboembolism (a blood clot which may go to the lung, symptoms of which are sudden chest pain and coughing up blood).
- Heart failure - problems with the pumping of your heart indicated by swollen ankles, chest pain, difficulty in breathing and palpitations or irregular beating of the heart, irregular or very fast or slow pulse; hypertension (high blood pressure, indicated by headaches, or generally feeling unwell).

Stereoids including Hydrocortisone Tablets can cause serious mental health problems. These are common in both adults and children. They can affect up to 1 every 100 people taking medicines like Hydrocortisone Tablets.
- Feeling depressed, including thinking about suicide.
- Feelings of being high (mania) or being low that go up and down.
- Feeling anxious, having problems sleeping, difficulty in thinking or being confused and losing your memory.
- Feeling, seeing or hearing things which do not exist. Having strange and frightening thoughts, changing how you act or having feelings of being alone.

Tell your doctor if you experience any of the following:

Effects on your digestive system
- Swollen abdomen.
- Ulcers or Thrush in the gullet (discomfort on swallowing).
- Bloating
- Hiccups

Effects on your muscles and bones
- Muscle weakness or wasting.
- Osteoporosis (brittle bones – bones that break easily).
- Eye infections may get worse
- Changes in vision as a result of cataracts or glaucoma
- Increased appetite and weight gain
- Infections of blood sugar levels, breakdown of body protein stores (loss of weight and muscle loss in arms or legs), loss of calcium and nitrogen.

Effects on your skin
- Thin or delicate skin, bruising, red or purple spots
- Slow healing of cuts or wounds
- Acne, sweating, redness
- Stretch marks

Effects on your eyes
- Changes in vision as a result of cataracts or glaucoma (increased pressure inside the eye)
- Thinning of the surface of the eye
- Your vision may get worse
- Bulging eyes.

Reporting of side effects: If you get any side effects, talk to your doctor, pharmacist or nurse. This includes any possible side effects of which you were unaware. They also report side effects directly via the Yellow Card Scheme at: www.mhra.gov.uk/yellowcard. By reporting side effects you can help provide more information on the safety of this medicine.

5) HOW TO STORE HYDROCORTISONE TABLETS

Store in a cool dry place. Do not dispose of medicines no longer required. These measures will help to protect the environment.

If the tablets show any signs of deterioration seek the advice of your pharmacist.

6) FURTHER INFORMATION

Hydrocortisone 10 mg tablets are white, oval and marked HYD 10 on one side and scored in quarters on the reverse. This can allow you to take lower dose of half of a tablet (5mg) or quarter of a tablet (2.5mg).

Hydrocortisone Tablets come in packs of 30 tablets.

Manufacturer and Product Licence Holder
Medicines for Specialisterne, 109 Franklinstræde, 1300 Copenhagen, Denmark. The other ingredients are lactose, magnesium stearate and maize starch.

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