

## Hydrocortisone (Cortisol)

### Active Ingredient

- Hydrocortisone

### What is in this leaflet

This leaflet contains some information about your medication. It does not take the place of talking to your doctor or pharmacist. All medicines have risks and benefits. Your doctor has weighed the risks of you taking this medication against the positive benefits they expect it will have for you. **If you have any concerns about taking this medicine, please contact us again or speak with your doctor or pharmacist for more information.** Keep this leaflet with the medicine as you may need to read it again in the future.

### What it is used for

This medication contains the active ingredient hydrocortisone. Cortisol belongs to a group of medicines called corticosteroids. Cortisol contains hydrocortisone, which is a hormone produced by the adrenal glands. Cortisol is used to replace the hydrocortisone in patients whose adrenal glands do not produce enough naturally. This occurs in conditions such as Addison's disease or when the adrenal glands are damaged or not working properly.

Your doctor may have prescribed hydrocortisone for another reason. Ask your doctor if you have any questions about why hydrocortisone has been prescribed for you.

### Before you take hydrocortisone

#### When you must NOT take it:

- If you are allergic to hydrocortisone
- If the medication is expired or has not been stored correctly

#### Let us know if you are:

- Pregnant, planning on becoming pregnant, or breastfeeding
- If you plan to have a surgery
- Suffer from any other medical conditions especially the following:
  - current or recent infection
  - cardiovascular disease

- kidney and liver problems
- stomach or duodenal ulcers, inflammation of the colon
- diabetes mellitus
- osteoporosis or other bone diseases
- chronic back problems
- convulsive disorders, such as epilepsy
- underactive thyroid
- Cushing's syndrome
- cancer that has spread or is spreading
- mental illness

- Take any other medications especially the following:
  - oral contraceptives (birth control pill)
  - medicines used to treat epilepsy, such as phenytoin and barbiturates
  - rifampicin, an antibiotic used to treat and prevent infections
  - diuretics, also called fluid capsules
  - digoxin, a medicine used to treat heart conditions
  - aspirin
  - live vaccines
  - insulin or oral medicines for diabetes.

### How to take hydrocortisone

#### How much to take

Please take this medication as directed by your doctor or pharmacist. Refer to the directions on the product label if required.

Do not stop taking this medicine suddenly unless your doctor tells you to. The dose may need to be reduced gradually when stopping treatment.

#### How to take it

Take the capsules with food to help reduce stomach upset.

#### If you forget to take it

If it is almost time for your next dose, skip the dose you missed and take your next dose as normal. Otherwise, take the missed dose as soon as you remember, and then go back to taking your capsules as you would normally. **Do not take two doses to make up for a dose you missed.**

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### If you take too much (overdose)

Immediately contact your doctor, the Poisons Information Centre (telephone 13 11 26) or go to the Accident and Emergency at the nearest hospital. If you take too much hydrocortisone, you may have symptoms of weakness, dizziness, convulsions, headache, nausea, vomiting and blurred vision.

### How to report side effects

If you experience any adverse experiences from this medication, you should report it via:

- Visiting [www.tga.gov.au/reporting-problems](http://www.tga.gov.au/reporting-problems)
- Call Adverse Medicine Events Line on 1300 134 237

**If it is an EMERGENCY call the Poisons Information Centre on 13 11 26 or call 000.**

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## Side effects

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**Please let us or your doctor know as soon as possible if you do not feel well while taking this medication.**

If you are over 65 years of age or are a postmenopausal woman, you may have an increased chance of getting side effects. Long term therapy with hydrocortisone may affect your bone density, making you more likely to get fractures or osteoporosis. In children, hydrocortisone may slow or stop their growth especially if it is used for a long time. Your child's doctor will discuss the risks and benefits involved.

Some side effects you may experience include:

- nausea
- increased appetite, weight gain
- dizziness, headaches
- insomnia (trouble sleeping)
- acne or blotchy skin
- thin fragile skin
- bruising or bleeding more easily than normal, purplish-blue spots or lines under the skin
- increase in body or facial hair

Tell your doctor as soon as possible if you notice any of the following:

- severe upper stomach pain with nausea and vomiting
- fits or convulsions, loss of consciousness
- weakness, loss of muscle mass
- wounds that will not or take longer to heal
- increased thirst and frequent urination

- severe indigestion with stomach pain and discomfort
- signs of infection such as fever, chills, sore throat or mouth ulcers
- blurred vision, changes in vision
- swelling of the face, hands, ankles or feet
- confusion, hallucinations, depression or mood swings
- swelling and redness along a vein which is tender to touch.

Other side effects not listed above may also occur in some patients. Tell your doctor if you notice anything that is making you feel unwell.

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## Storage

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Products expire 6 months after preparation. Keep in the original packaging until you need to take your next dose.

Store your medication in a cool, dry place that is below 25°C and away from sunlight.

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