

# Hydrocortisone

## Why is this medication prescribed?

This medication is used to treat various conditions such as severe allergic reactions, arthritis, blood diseases, breathing problems, certain cancers, eye diseases, intestinal disorders, and skin diseases. It decreases your body's natural defensive response and reduces symptoms such as swelling and allergic-type reactions. Hydrocortisone is a corticosteroid hormone (glucocorticoid). This injectable form of hydrocortisone is used when a similar drug cannot be taken by mouth or when a very fast treatment is needed, especially in patients with severe medical conditions

## How should this medicine be used?

This medication is given by slow injection into a vein or directly into a muscle by a health care professional as directed by your doctor. Do not increase your dose or use this drug more often than prescribed without consulting your doctor. Before using this product, check it visually for particles or discoloration. If either is present, do not use the liquid. If you have been using this medication for a long time, do not suddenly stop using it without your doctor's approval. Your dose may need to be gradually decreased to reduce symptoms such as weakness, weight loss, nausea, or extreme tiredness.

## Other uses for this medicine

This drug may also be used with other medications as a replacement for certain hormones.

## What special precautions should I follow?

Before using hydrocortisone, tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are allergic to it; or to other corticosteroids (e.g., prednisone); or if you have any other allergies.

This drug may make you dizzy. Use caution while driving, using machinery, or doing any activity that requires alertness.

This medication may mask signs of infection or put you at greater risk of developing very serious infections. Report to your doctor any injuries or signs of infection.

If you have been using this medication for a long time, your body may not be able to make enough natural steroids while you are under stress due to infection, surgery, or injury. If you have stopped using this drug within the past 12 months, you may need to start using it again if your body is under severe stress.

Do not have immunizations, vaccinations, or skin tests unless specifically directed by your doctor. Live vaccines may cause serious problems (e.g., infection) if given while you are using this medication. Avoid contact with people who have recently received oral polio vaccine or flu vaccine inhaled through the nose. Avoid contact with people who have chickenpox or measles unless you have previously had these diseases (e.g., in childhood). Before having surgery, tell your doctor or dentist that you are using this medication or have used it within the last 12 months. If you have diabetes, this drug may increase your blood sugar levels. Caution is advised when using this drug in the elderly because they may be more sensitive to its side effects, especially osteoporosis. Caution is advised when using this drug for a long time in children. This medication may temporarily slow down a child's rate of growth in children.

This medication may temporarily slow down a child's rate of growth. A preservative (benzyl alcohol) that may be found in this product or in the liquid used to mix this product can infrequently cause serious (sometimes fatal) problems if given in large amounts (more than 100 milligrams per kilogram daily) to an infant during the first months of life. This medication should be used only when clearly needed during pregnancy. This medication passes into breast milk

### **What special dietary instructions should I follow?**

Limit alcoholic beverages while using this medication to decrease the risk of stomach/intestinal bleeding.

### **What should I do if I forget a dose?**

If you miss a dose, use it as soon as you remember. If it is near the time of the next dose, skip the missed dose and resume your usual dosing schedule. Do not double the dose to catch up

### **What side effects can this medication cause?**

Stomach upset, headache, dizziness, menstrual period changes, trouble sleeping, increased appetite, weight gain, or pain/redness/swelling at the injection site may occur. Unlikely but serious side effects may occur like- bone/joint pain, easy bruising/bleeding, black stools, vomit that looks like coffee grounds, severe stomach/abdominal pain, increased thirst/urination, fast/slow/pounding/irregular heartbeat, shortness of breath, swelling of the ankles/feet, tendon pain, persistent weight gain, puffy face, unusual hair growth, thinning skin, slow wound healing, signs of infection (e.g., persistent fever/cough/sore throat, painful urination, eye pain/discharge), muscle weakness/pain, mental/mood changes (e.g., mood swings, depression, agitation), vision changes, seizures, unusual skin growth, serious allergic reaction- including: rash, itching/swelling (especially of the face/tongue/throat), severe dizziness, trouble breathing.

### **What storage conditions are needed for this medicine?**

Store at room temperature between 20-25 degrees C away from light and moisture. After mixing and dilution in correct IV fluids, the drug may be kept at room temperature for up to 72 hours if protected from light

**In case of emergency/overdose**

If overdose is suspected, contact your local poison control center or emergency room immediately.

