

Sick day rules for children with adrenal insufficiency

This leaflet is for parents of children who have been diagnosed with adrenal insufficiency. It gives guidance on what to do if your child is unwell. If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to your specialist nurse.

Introduction

Adrenal insufficiency is where the adrenal glands do not produce enough of the steroid hormone 'cortisol'. Children with this condition will be managed on steroid medication called hydrocortisone, which is taken orally three times daily to ensure that they remain healthy. When a child is unwell, normally their bodies will increase the amount of steroid it produces. Children with adrenal insufficiency cannot do this so you will need to increase the amount of hydrocortisone your child is taking orally.

What to do when your child is unwell

1. Mild illness with raised temperature: If your child has a mild illness with a raised temperature (above 38°C), such as a cold, flu or diarrhoea then:
 - a. Double the normal doses of hydrocortisone for 24-48 hours until he/she is feeling better.
 - b. If you are still concerned, visit your GP.
2. Moderate illness with vomiting: If your child has moderate illness such as vomiting then:
 - a. Double the normal doses of hydrocortisone for 24/48 hours, making sure the tablets stay down for at least an hour.
 - b. If the dose is vomited up in less than an hour, then repeat the dose.
 - c. If vomiting continues you may have to give your emergency intra-muscular hydrocortisone injection and you will have to bring them to hospital to be assessed.
3. Severe illness or accident: If your child is unable to tolerate any fluids, collapses or is involved in a serious accident which requires medical attention then:
 - a. Give intra-muscular hydrocortisone and call an ambulance.
 - b. Dosage of intra-muscular hydrocortisone is as follows:
 - i. Under 5 years give 25mg
 - ii. 5-12 years give 50 mg
 - iii. 13 years give 100mg

Remember

- c. Always carry a Medic Alert tag with you stating "Adrenal Insufficiency".
- d. Carry an injection of emergency intra-muscular hydrocortisone with you during holidays.
- e. Call for advice 0118 322 5111 and ask to be put through to a paediatric registrar to if you are unsure of what to do.