

Fludrocortisone (Florinef®)

How does fludrocortisone work?

Fludrocortisone (floo-dro-**kor**-ti-sone) belongs to a class of drugs called mineralocorticoids. It replaces certain hormones when the body does not make enough, such as in Addison's disease. It helps keep a balance of water and minerals in the body. It is also used to treat fainting due to low blood pressure, because it promotes fluid retention. It may be prescribed for other conditions.

How should I give it?

Fludrocortisone comes in pill form. Give it at regular times to keep a steady level in the bloodstream.

Use this medicine exactly as prescribed, even if your child feels fine.

Your child should be awake and alert when taking any medicine.

For children who cannot swallow pills:

- Crush it between 2 spoons or crush it inside a plastic bag or in folded paper.
- Mix the powder with a **very small** amount (about 1 teaspoon) of soft food, such as applesauce, chocolate syrup, ice cream, jelly, or yogurt. Make sure your child takes all of the mixture.

Other instructions:

Are there any precautions about food or other medicines?

Follow your doctor's directions for using this medicine. Fludrocortisone may be given with or without food.

Do **not** give salt substitutes or potassium supplements, unless recommended by your doctor.

Avoid alcohol-containing foods, beverages, or non-prescription medicines (such as cough syrup) while using this medicine.

Warning! Certain medicines interact with fludrocortisone. It is very important to check with the doctor, nurse practitioner, or pharmacist before giving **any** other prescription or non-prescription medicines, herbs, or vitamins.

What should I do if a dose is missed?

Take the missed dose as soon as you remember that day. **Never give a double dose.** If your child misses two doses, call the clinic.

If your child vomits (throws up) within 30 minutes after receiving a dose, give it again. If your child vomits the second dose do not repeat the dose again.

If your child misses or vomits two doses, call the clinic.

What are the side effects?

- Common
- change in appetite
 - upset stomach
 - headache
- Occasional
- trouble sleeping
 - mood swings or personality changes
 - growth suppression
 - inhibition of the body's natural steroid production

The dose may need to be increased slowly to avoid side effects.

If your child has other side effects that you think are due to this medicine, call your doctor or pharmacist.

When should I call the clinic?

- slow, fast or irregular heartbeat, or chest pain that lasts longer than 15 minutes
- swelling in face, hands, feet, mouth, eyelids, or throat
- fainting
- confusion
- weakness
- numbness or tingling in hands, feet, or lips
- dry mouth, increased thirst
- headache
- nausea or vomiting
- fever, muscle, or joint pain
- problems urinating
- sudden stomach pain
- yellow skin or eyes
- allergic reaction; signs may include:
 - fever or chills
 - rash or hives
 - wheezing
 - trouble breathing - **call 911**

What else do I need to know?

Your child should **always wear** a medical-alert bracelet or necklace that states “**steroid dependent.**”

Your doctor may ask your child to come to the clinic for examination to find out if the dose or the medicine needs to be changed.

Tell your doctor if your child has:

- high blood pressure
- heart, liver, or kidney disease
- glaucoma
- tuberculosis, herpes infection, or any other infection
- an allergic reaction to hydrocortisone (Cortef®), dexamethasone (Decadron®), or triamcinolone (Aristocort®).

This medicine may cover up signs of infection or may allow your child to get new infections more easily.

Your child should avoid being around anyone with chickenpox. Check with your doctor before getting any immunizations (vaccines).

It may take 2 to 4 weeks for fludrocortisone to start to work.

Do not stop giving the medicine abruptly. Check with your doctor **before stopping** it. Your child should taper off it over a period of time.

You and your child should know the names of all the medicines he or she is taking. **Share this information** with anyone involved in your child's care. Please remember to bring the medicine container when your child comes to the clinic or emergency department.

Always make sure you have enough medicine on hand. Each time you refill your prescription, check to see how many refills are left. If no refills are left, the pharmacy will need 2 or 3 days to contact the doctor to renew the prescription.

Check the label and expiration date before giving each dose. Ask your pharmacist what to do with outdated or unused medicines. If there is no “take-back” program empty them into the trash.

Store all medicines in their original container and away from direct sunlight or heat. Do not store in humid places such as the bathroom. Keep them out of children’s reach, locked up if possible.

If too much or the wrong kind of medicine is taken, call the Poison Control Center toll-free at 1-800-222-1222. If your child is unconscious or has a seizure, **call 911.**

Questions?

This sheet is not specific to your child but provides general information. If you have any questions, please call the clinic or pharmacy.

For more reading material about this and other health topics, please call or visit the Family Resource Center library, or visit our Web site: www.childrensmn.org.

Children’s Hospitals and Clinics of Minnesota
Patient/Family Education
2525 Chicago Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55404
2/08 ©Copyright