

## Fludrocortisone Oral Uses

Fludrocortisone is a man-made form of a natural substance (glucocorticoid) made by the body. **It is used along with other medications (e.g., hydrocortisone) to treat low glucocorticoid levels caused by disease of the adrenal gland (e.g., Addison's disease, adrenocortical insufficiency, salt-losing adrenogenital syndrome).**

Glucocorticoids are needed in many ways for the body to function well. They are important for salt and water balance and keeping blood pressure normal. They are also needed to break down carbohydrates in your diet.

**OTHER USES:** This section contains uses of this drug that are not listed in the approved professional labeling for the drug but that may be prescribed by your health care professional. Use this drug for a condition that is listed in this section only if it has been so prescribed by your health care professional.

This medication may also be used to treat certain types of low blood pressure (chronic postural hypotension).

### How to use Fludrocortisone Oral

Take this medication by mouth with or without food, usually once daily or as directed by your doctor. Your doctor will adjust your dose to the one that is best for you. The dosage is based on your medical condition and response to therapy.

In order to get the most benefit from this medication, follow the dosing schedule carefully, and take this medication exactly as prescribed. To help you remember, take it at the same time each day. If you are taking this medication on another schedule besides every day (e.g., only 3 days a week), it may help to mark your calendar with a reminder. Do not increase or decrease your dose, take this drug more often, or stop taking this

medication without your doctor's approval. Some conditions may become worse when the drug is suddenly stopped. Your dose may need to be gradually decreased.

Inform your doctor if your condition persists or worsens.

## **Side effects**

Stomach upset, headache, and menstrual changes (e.g., delayed/irregular/absent periods) may occur. If any of these effects persist or worsen, contact your doctor or pharmacist promptly.

Remember that your doctor has prescribed this medication because he or she has judged that the benefit to you is greater than the risk of side effects. Many people using this medication do not have serious side effects.

Tell your doctor immediately if any of these unlikely but serious side effects occur: change in skin appearance (e.g., color changes, thinning, fatty areas), easy bleeding/bruising, dizziness, slow wound healing, signs of infection (e.g., fever, persistent sore throat, skin sores), bone/joint/muscle pain, stomach/abdominal pain, puffy face, swelling of the hands/feet, severe tiredness, increased thirst/urination, unusual weight gain, muscle weakness. Tell your doctor immediately if any of these rare but very serious side effects occur: black stools, eye problems (e.g., pain, redness, vision changes), severe/continuous headaches, fast/pounding/irregular heartbeat, mental/mood changes (e.g., agitation, depression, mood swings), seizure, vomit that looks like coffee grounds.

A very serious allergic reaction to this drug is rare. However, seek immediate medical attention if you notice any of the following symptoms of a serious allergic reaction: rash, itching, swelling, severe dizziness, trouble breathing.

This is not a complete list of possible side effects. If you notice other effects not listed above, contact your doctor or pharmacist.

## **Does this medication have side effects?**

**The following side effects are associated with Fludrocortisone Oral:**

### **Rare side effects:**

Chronic Heart Failure	Severe
Inflammation of Skin caused by an Allergy	Severe
Itching	Severe
Hives	Severe
Dizzy	Severe
Rash	Severe
Fluid Retention in the Legs, Feet, Arms or Hands	Severe
Severe Headache	Severe
Trouble Breathing	Severe
Life Threatening Allergic Reaction	Severe
Giant Hives	Severe
Reaction due to an Allergy	Severe
Low Amount of Potassium in the Blood	Severe

Before taking fludrocortisone, tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are allergic to it; or if you have any other allergies.

This medication should not be used if you have certain medical conditions.

Before using this medicine, consult your doctor or pharmacist if you have: fungal infection in your blood (e.g., candidiasis, valley fever).

Before using this medication, tell your doctor or pharmacist your medical history, especially of: bleeding problems, blood clots, brittle bones (osteoporosis), certain nerve/muscle problem (myasthenia gravis), diabetes, eye problems (e.g., cataracts, glaucoma, infection of the eye), heart problems (e.g., congestive heart failure), high blood pressure, infections (e.g., herpes, tuberculosis), kidney disease, liver disease (e.g., cirrhosis), mental/mood disorders (e.g., anxiety, depression, psychosis), low blood

minerals (e.g., calcium, potassium), stomach/intestinal problems (e.g., diverticulitis, peptic ulcer disease, ulcerative colitis), seizures, underactive thyroid (hypothyroidism).

Fludrocortisone makes your body hold on to salt (sodium) and get rid of other salts (e.g., calcium, potassium). Follow your doctor's advice on how much salt, potassium, and calcium should be in your diet.

This medication may mask signs of infection or put you at greater risk of developing very serious infections. Report any injuries or signs of infection (e.g., persistent sore throat/fever/cough, pain while urinating, skin sores) that occur during treatment.

Do not have immunizations/vaccinations without the consent of your doctor, and avoid contact with people who have recently received oral polio vaccine or flu vaccine inhaled through the nose.

Avoid exposure to chickenpox or measles infection while taking this medication unless you have previously had these infections (e.g., in childhood). If you are exposed to either of these infections and you have not previously had them, seek immediate medical attention.

If you have been taking this medication for a long time, your body may not produce enough natural steroids. You may need to start taking additional corticosteroids, especially if your body is stressed due to a major infection, surgery or injury. Deaths due to low steroid levels have sometimes occurred during such stresses. Tell your doctor immediately if any of the following side effects occur: unusual weakness, sudden weight loss, dizziness. Consult your doctor or pharmacist for more details, and tell them that you use (or have used) any type of corticosteroid. Carry a warning card or medical ID bracelet that identifies your need for oral corticosteroids during times of stress. Consult your doctor or pharmacist now for specific advice about stress situations. You may need to carry a supply of corticosteroid tablets as a precaution.

Before having surgery, tell your doctor or dentist that you are using this medication or have taken it within the last 12 months.

If you have a history of ulcers or take large doses of aspirin or other arthritis medicine, limit alcoholic beverages while taking this medication to lower the risk of stomach/intestinal bleeding.

If you have diabetes, this drug may make it harder to control your blood sugar levels. Monitor your blood sugar levels regularly and inform your doctor of the results. Your diabetic medication or diet may need to be adjusted.

Caution is advised when using this drug in children because there is a slight risk that it may temporarily slow down a child's growth rate, but this will probably not affect final adult height. Though this effect is rare, monitor your child's height regularly.

The elderly may be more sensitive to the effects of this drug, especially water retention.

During pregnancy, this medication should be used only when clearly needed. Discuss the risks and benefits with your doctor. Infants born to mothers who have been using this medication for an extended time may have low levels of corticosteroid hormone. Tell your doctor immediately if you notice symptoms such as persistent nausea/vomiting, severe diarrhea, or weakness in your newborn

This medication passes into breast milk and may have undesirable effects on a nursing infant. Consult your doctor before breast-feeding.

## **Precautions**

Your doctor or pharmacist may already be aware of any possible drug interactions and may be monitoring you for them. Do not start, stop, or change the dosage of any medicine before checking with them first.

This drug should not be used with the following medication because very serious interactions may occur: mifepristone.

If you are currently using the medication listed above, tell your doctor or pharmacist before starting fludrocortisone.

Before using this medication, tell your doctor or pharmacist of all prescription and nonprescription/herbal products you may use, especially: aldesleukin, aspirin/nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs such as ibuprofen, indomethacin), blood thinners (e.g., warfarin), digoxin, drugs to treat diabetes (e.g., insulin, glyburide), hormones (e.g., androgens, birth control pills, estrogens), immunosuppressants (e.g., cyclosporine, natalizumab), drugs for myasthenia gravis (e.g., neostigmine, pyridostigmine), vaccines, drugs that may cause potassium loss (e.g., amphotericin B, "water pills" such as furosemide or thiazides), drugs affecting liver enzymes that remove fludrocortisone from your body (e.g., rifamycins such as rifampin/rifabutin, certain anti-seizure medicines such as barbituates/phenytoin).

Check all prescription and nonprescription medicine labels carefully since many medications contain pain relievers/fever reducers (NSAIDs such as aspirin, ibuprofen, or naproxen) that may increase your risk for side effects if taken together with this medication. Low-dose aspirin should be continued if prescribed by your doctor for specific medical reasons such as heart attack or stroke prevention (usually at dosages of 81-325 milligrams per day). Ask your doctor or pharmacist for more details.

This medication may interfere with certain laboratory tests, possibly causing false results. Make sure laboratory personnel and all your doctors know you use this drug.

This document does not contain all possible interactions. Therefore, before using this product, tell your doctor or pharmacist of all the products you use. Keep a list of all your medications with you, and share the list with your doctor and pharmacist.

**MISSED DOSE:**

If you miss a dose, take 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.