

Instructions for Initiating Cortef Replacement- For the adrenal Stress Hormone, Cortisol

Here are some options in starting Cortef or Hydrocortisone (generic name):

Basically it is a 4 hour drug

If you take more than 5 mg you get more time that it lasts so 10 mg last for 5 hours or so. Try to take it before you want to get out of bed. By 30 to 60 minutes. Like 7 or 8 am.

Each pill is 5 mg and scored – you can bite it in half. Some patients may be given 10 mg. Adjust accordingly.

First try a quarter tablet (1.25 mg) if no reaction then take a half in 3 hours and again in 4 hours.

Next day

---5 mg in am and that is it for a few days.

Or ---5 mg in am and 5 mg at noon and repeat this schedule until you feel fine to go up – it could be the next day or a week depending on your fear of a reaction or steroid hormones in general. Then the next day take whatever you are comfortable with every 4 hours.

Next go eventually to this dosing schedule:

7.5 or 10 mg at 7 or 8 am, get up at 8 or 9,

5 mg at 1 pm,

2.5 mg or 5 mg at 4pm

and if needed 2.5 mg at 8 pm for later nights. (that is 17.5 mg to 20 mg total).

*Some patients will
be adjusted to take
15 mg in the AM

The adrenal hormone usually produced on non-stressful days is 25 mg. When you take it orally one third is degraded in the liver – called first pass effect and therefore the Addison's patients who have marginal adrenal function may take up to 35-40 mg a day to get the effect of 25 mg in the blood stream. I say thin people are born with thin adrenals and often go around life with marginal function until a major stress (spousal death), toxic exposure (mold exposure), infection (TB). Look back and think if you craved sweets and salts as a kid or not and it may explain why now you have marginal function or adrenal fatigue or mild insufficiency.

Double the dose for colds, triple for flu and also increase for traveling or other stressors, fights, headaches or anxiety episodes. It should help with fatigue, pain tolerance, allergy, mood, sometimes chest pain, definitely depression!

Try it and tell me of any major side effects, over time if you want to eat too much (ravenous) or if you gain weight – then it may be too much. You will figure out what you need and let me know where you are in your discovery process.

Read: Adrenal Fatigue – does not discuss cortef, but it does talk about adrenal dysfunction. You may purchase this book at the office or online for 15.00

Jefferies: The safe use of Hydrocortisone. Copies will be available at the office for you to read or purchase. This is a great description of the extensive experience of this endocrinologist on the helpfulness of cortef for many medical problems including fatigue, infertility, arthritis and the safety of its use in the thousands of patients.