

Steroid Emergency Cards

Action Required by 13th May 2021

In August 2020, an important National Patient Safety Alert (NPSA) for Steroid Emergency Cards was published. This alert highlights the need for Steroid Emergency Cards to support early recognition and treatment of adrenal crisis in adults. **All patients taking specific high dose steroids should be given a Steroid Emergency Card.**

The Steroid Emergency Card Alert

The NPSA Safety Alert is available here: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/NPSA-Emergency-Steroid-Card-FINAL-2.3.pdf>

Providers must have a procedure in place to ensure that all patients that receive a prescription for a high dose steroid are offered a Steroid Emergency Card.

This is the responsibility of the provider rather than the responsibility of a pharmacy that the patient chooses. However, the LPC have contacted community pharmacies in the Doncaster CCG area to request support for GP practices when issuing cards. Practices may wish to form an agreement with a pharmacy that they work closely with to issue Steroid Emergency Cards when relevant prescriptions are dispensed. Note that this is not a service that the community pharmacy is obliged to undertake and the issuing of Steroid Emergency Cards remains the remit of the practice prescribing the treatment.

Where to Obtain Steroid Emergency Cards

Steroid Emergency Cards can be ordered from:

- NHS Forms at NHS Business Services Authority - <http://www.nhsforms.co.uk/>
- Primary Care Support England - <https://secure.pcse.england.nhs.uk/forms/pcsssignin.aspx>

Summary of Medicines that Require a Steroid Emergency Card

Guidance relating to the prescribed medicines that require a Steroid Emergency Card is here: <https://www.endocrinology.org/media/4030/spssfesupportingsec-finalhls-19022021-2-1.pdf>

Common medicines that may require a Steroid Emergency Card to be issued include:

For long term conditions

Beclometasone 625 microgram per day or more
Betamethasone 750 microgram per day or more
Budesonide 1.5mg per day or more
Deflazacort 6mg per day or more
Dexamethasone 500 microgram per day or more
Hydrocortisone 15mg per day or more
Methylprednisolone 4mg per day or more
Prednisone 5mg per day or more
Prednisolone 5mg per day or more

For acute treatments (one week course or longer, and the patient has been on a long-term course within the last year or has regular need for repeated acute courses)

Beclometasone 5mg per day or more
Betamethasone 6mg per day or more
Budesonide 12mg per day or more
Deflazacort 48mg per day or more
Dexamethasone 4mg per day or more
Hydrocortisone 120mg per day or more
Methylprednisolone 32mg per day or more
Prednisone 40mg per day or more
Prednisolone 40mg per day or more

For inhaled corticosteroids

Beclometasone > 1000 microgram per day (e.g. Clenil, Easihaler or Soprobec)
Beclometasone extra fine particle > 500 microgram per day (e.g. Qvar, Kelhale or Fostair)
Budesonide > 500 microgram per day
Ciclesonide > 480 microgram per day
Fluticasone > 500 microgram per day
Mometasone > 800 microgram per day

Patients treated with **potent topical corticosteroids**, supplied with large quantities of $\geq 200\text{g}$ per week for 4 weeks or more, or those using potent topical corticosteroids along with one of the steroids mentioned above at a lower dose than would ordinarily meet the threshold also require a Steroid Emergency Card.

Patients receiving long term **high dose nasal corticosteroids** require a Steroid Emergency Card – [See guidance](#)

Patients receiving **high dose rectal corticosteroids** for prolonged durations require a Steroid Emergency Card – [See guidance](#)

Hospitals and Other Providers Issuing the Steroid Emergency Card

All healthcare organisations commissioned by the NHS should have their own systems for issuing Steroid Emergency Cards when a qualifying high dose steroid treatment is initiated.

Good practice is for primary care teams to liaise with patients that require a card during routine contact to ensure that they have the correct card and are aware to carry it in line with guidance.

What are the Differences between the Steroid Emergency Card and the Steroid Treatment Card?

Steroid Emergency Cards are different to the blue coloured Steroid Treatment Cards. The Steroid Emergency Card (red/white card) should be given to all patients with primary adrenal insufficiency and those who are steroid dependent (on a long term steroids at the doses stated above or taking acute courses of high dose steroids as detailed in the guidance referred to above). The Steroid Treatment Card (blue card) contains instructions for the patient and informs healthcare professionals that the patient is taking steroids when the patient shows the card.

Further Guidance

Further details and a downloadable pdf of the Steroid Emergency Card is available here:

<https://www.endocrinology.org/adrenal-crisis>

If you have any questions, please contact the Doncaster CCG Medicines Management Team. [Click here](#) for contact details.