**Steroid Sick Day Rules**

This information is intended for patients on steroid treatment at the risk of adrenal insufficiency/adrenal crisis. It explains more about the steroid sick day rules. If you have any further questions, please speak to the healthcare professional supervising your care.

**Why are steroid sick day rules important?**

Taking steroid medication such as Prednisolone tablets, steroid inhalers and steroid injections can stop your adrenal glands from making the hormone, Cortisol. When this occurs, it is known as "Adrenal Insufficiency". Cortisol is essential for life and when you are unwell, your adrenals produce more Cortisol. You have been given this information because your healthcare professional thinks you could be at risk of becoming *seriously* unwell (known as an adrenal crisis) if you are unwell or have a procedure, such as surgery, without an appropriate increase in your steroid medication.

**What is an adrenal crisis?**

An adrenal crisis occurs when there is insufficient circulating Cortisol in the body. This can be life-threatening if not treated.

**What are the signs and symptoms of an adrenal crisis?**

Low blood pressure. Feeling dizzy or light-headed. Fever, shivering or feeling very cold. Nausea and /or vomiting. Feeling very weak. Extreme tiredness, drowsiness or confusion. Aching muscles and/or joints. Stomach ache. Severe diarrhoea.

**How can I prevent an adrenal crisis?**

• Ensure you follow the sick day rules described below and know what to do when unwell

• Ensure you have a sufficient supply of the steroid medications to take when unwell if applicable

• Never stop your steroid treatment abruptly or skip doses if applicable

• Only reduce your steroid dose as advised by your health care professional

• If you start to feel unwell following a steroid dose reduction, contact your doctor for advice

• If you are unwell, make sure that the person treating you knows you are at risk of adrenal crisis and show them your NHS Steroid Emergency Card.

**SICK DAY RULES:**

**When do I need to seek urgent medical attention?**

* **Mild illness without fever**: No action is required.
* **Illness with fever**, **vomiting or diarrhoea or if extremely unwell**: You must seek urgent medical attention: go to the Emergency Department, or call an ambulance via 999. Take your NHS Steroid Emergency Card with you and ensure that the team looking after you know that you are on steroid medication and that you are at risk of adrenal crisis and may need a steroid injection.

**Pregnancy, Surgery and Dental procedures:** Please ensure the healthcare professional involved in your care is aware you are on steroid medication.