

Emergency hydrocortisone shot: Solu-Cortef Act-O-Vial



Children'sSM
Healthcare of Atlanta

What is cortisol?

Cortisol is a hormone made by the adrenal glands. It helps your body to:

- Maintain blood pressure.
- Control blood sugar.
- Heal itself when sick or injured.

What is adrenal insufficiency?

Adrenal insufficiency is when your adrenal glands do not make enough cortisol. Your child may need to take a medicine called hydrocortisone. This is a replacement for the natural hormone. Give your child hydrocortisone by mouth (to swallow) as prescribed by their doctor.

What is Solu-Cortef Act-O-Vial?

Solu-Cortef Act-O-Vial is a type of hydrocortisone. You may need to give your child an emergency injection (shot) of this medicine in cases of severe sickness.

When should I give an emergency shot?

You may need to give an emergency shot if your child shows signs of severe sickness, such as:

- Looks very sick
- Is listless or lethargic (extremely tired with little or no energy and may hardly respond to you)
- Is vomiting (throwing up)
- Cannot keep medicines down

Talk with your child's doctor about specific instructions for your child.

What supplies do I need to give an emergency shot?

Keep an emergency kit with you at all times. Include these supplies:

- Solu-Cortef Act-O-Vial
- 2 alcohol wipes
- Sterile syringe with a needle
- Gauze
- Bandage

You will also need a disposable sharps container (such as an empty laundry detergent bottle with a screw-top cap). Label it "Home Sharps Not for Recycling."

In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.

Emergency hydrocortisone shot, continued

How do I give an emergency shot?

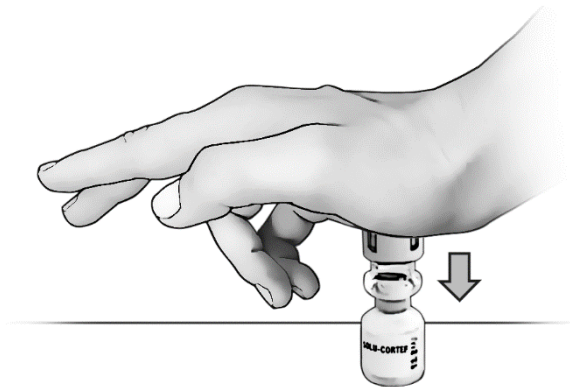
1. Wash your hands well with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

2. Gather your supplies:

- Solu-Cortef Act-O-Vial
- 2 alcohol wipes
- 1 sterile syringe with needle
- Gauze
- Bandage
- Disposable sharps container

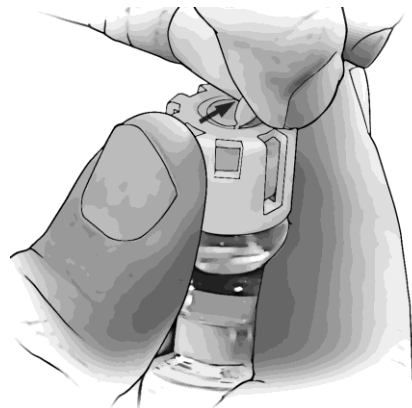
3. Mix the medicine:

- Press the cap down on the medicine vial. This releases liquid into the powder.
- Turn the vial up and down a few times to mix the medicine.
- When fully mixed, you will no longer see powder in the liquid.



4. Remove the disc:

- Peel off the disc on the cap.
- You will then see the rubber stopper where you will later insert (put in) the needle.



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Emergency hydrocortisone shot, continued

5. Clean the vial:

- Use an alcohol wipe to clean the rubber stopper.

6. Prepare the medicine syringe:

- Open the sterile syringe.
- Screw the needle onto the syringe.
- Point the syringe with the needle away from you. Then pull the cover straight away from the needle.
- Carefully put the needle into the rubber stopper of the medicine vial.
- Turn the medicine vial and syringe upside down.
- Gently pull back on the plunger so medicine flows into the syringe.
- Pull back until you reach the correct dose for your child.

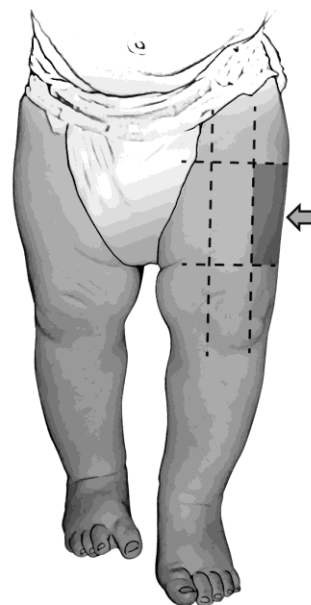
7. Check the syringe for air bubbles:

- While pointed up, gently tap the syringe and push the plunger to get rid of bubbles if spotted.
- Check again to make sure the dose is still correct. Pull back more medicine if needed.



8. Find the area of skin where you will give the shot:

- The correct area is about halfway up the thigh and towards the outside of the thigh.
- Clean that area of skin with a new alcohol wipe and let it dry.

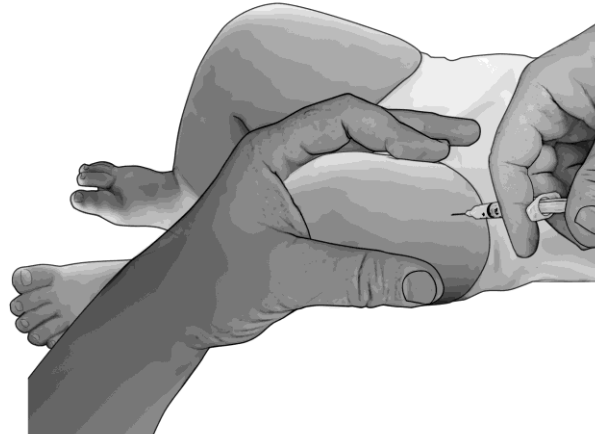


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Emergency hydrocortisone shot, continued

9. Give the medicine:

- Hold the syringe like a pencil in your dominant hand (the hand you use to write or draw).
- Using your other hand, press down on the skin so the skin is flat around the cleaned area.
- Insert the needle at a 90-degree angle into the cleaned area. Push the syringe plunger so the medicine goes in.
- Keep the needle in that spot for 10 seconds so that the medicine goes into the body.
- Remove the needle from the skin. Place the syringe with needle still attached into the sharps container.
- Using gauze, press down on the spot where you gave the shot. It may bleed a little.
- Cover the spot with a bandage.



What should I do after giving an emergency shot?

Take your child to an emergency department (ED) right after giving the shot **even if your child seems to be improving.**

Call your child's doctor if you have any questions about stress dose steroids for sickness or about the emergency shot.

What are the possible side effects?

Side effects may include:

- Irritation, such as redness, where you gave the shot
- Fast heartbeat
- Nausea

How do I store the Solu-Cortef Act-O-Vial?

- Store vials in an emergency kit. Keep them at room temperature and away from light.
- Once mixed, the medicine is good for 72 hours at room temperature.
- If you give a dose, you will need to get a refill from the pharmacy.

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Emergency hydrocortisone shot, continued

What else do I need to know?

- Always tell your child’s doctor, dentist and ED staff about any medicines your child takes. This includes Solu-Cortef Act-O-Vial.
- Check the expiration date on the medicine vial.
 - If the medicine expires, ask for a refill from the pharmacy.
 - Return all medicines to the pharmacy after they expire. The pharmacy will dispose of the medicines.
- Your child should wear a medical alert bracelet or necklace.
 - It should say that your child has adrenal insufficiency. This way, if they are ever very sick or hurt, health care workers will know that your child may need an emergency shot.
 - For more information, visit the MedicAlert website at medicalert.com. You can also call MedicAlert at 1-800-432-5378.
- Please talk with a member of your child’s care team if you have any questions.

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This teaching sheet contains general information only. Talk with your child’s doctor or a member of your child’s healthcare team about specific care of your child.

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