MEDICATION INFORMATION LEAFLET FOR

DEXAMETHASONE

This leaflet should be used in conjunction with the complete consumer medicine information (CMI) which is available from any pharmacy.

This leaflet contains information about Dexamethasone including details of known side effects. It does not include every possible side effect.

The type and severity of side effects experienced differs for each child. Some side effects are minor and easily treated at home. However, others may be more serious and require prompt medical assessment. Side effects from treatment are routinely monitored with blood tests and clinical examination. If you have any questions about side effects during treatment, please speak to your doctor. Also, if your child experiences any problems or side effects during treatment, please contact your doctor, clinical nurse consultant/coordinator or pharmacy staff for advice.

USE

- Therapy used to treat some types of leukaemia, solid tumour and brain tumour
- Therapy used to treat other conditions such as inflammation, swelling and nausea or vomiting

OTHER NAMES

- Dexmethsone®

PRESENTATION

- White tablets – 0.5mg & 4mg
- Clear liquid – 1mg/mL
- Drawn up in a syringe for intravenous use

ADMINISTRATION

- Oral
- Intravenous injection

SIDE EFFECTS *Continued overleaf*

Common

IMMEDIATE (within 1-2 days of receiving drug)	DELAYED (within 1-2 weeks of receiving drug)
• Stomach irritation • Mood changes • Increased appetite • High blood sugar levels	• Weight gain • Acne • Increased susceptibility to infection, especially when used for prolonged periods. Signs of infection such as pain and fever may not be obvious

Less common

- Suppression of adrenal gland function when used for prolonged periods. Tapering doses are used to allow adrenal function to return to normal
- Difficulty with sleeping
- Decreased bone density
- Muscle weakness
- Abnormal salt levels in the body
- Gut ulceration

VICS PAEDIATRIC INTEGRATED CANCER SERVICE

SIDE EFFECTS (CONT.)

Rare

- Allergic reactions which may be life-threatening. Symptoms of a severe reaction may include skin rash or hives, swelling or tingling of the lips and face, difficulty breathing and low blood pressure which may lead to collapse. Seek medical attention immediately if any of the above symptoms occur
- Cataracts
- Increased pressure within the eye (glaucoma)
- Inflammation of the pancreas

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Take with or after food to avoid stomach irritation. A medication may be prescribed with dexamethasone to help protect the stomach.
- A combination of 0.5 mg and 4 mg tablets may be required to provide an accurate dose. The required combination of tablets should be given together as a single dose as directed by your doctor or pharmacist.
- If you have forgotten to take a dose, do not take an extra dose. Speak to your doctor or pharmacist for advice about managing the missed dose.
- Ask your doctor or pharmacist before using any other medicine including over-the-counter medicines and complementary medicines.
- Keep ALL medication out of the reach of children.
- Avoid excessive exposure to sunlight and use a high SPF sunscreen.

CONTACT

For further information, or to discuss any concerns you may have about your child's medication, please feel free to contact the Children's Cancer Centre of your child's treating hospital:

- The Royal Children's Hospital Oncology Pharmacy (03) 9345 6290
- Monash Children's Hospital Cancer Centre (03) 8572 3456 or Pharmacist desk (03) 8572 3464

Disclaimer: This information has been prepared by the Paediatric Integrated Cancer Service, with input from the Children's Cancer Centre Pharmacy Departments at The Royal Children's Hospital and Monash Children's Hospital. This information is for educational purposes only and should not be seen as a substitute for advice from your doctor or other professional healthcare provider. If you have specific questions about the content of this information, or any other medical matter, it is recommended that you consult your doctor, pharmacist or other professional healthcare provider. This information is considered to be true and correct at the date of publication, however changes in circumstances after the time of publication may impact on the accuracy of this information.

Reviewed August 2020
Available at **www.vics.org.au/pics**

VICS PAEDIATRIC INTEGRATED CANCER SERVICE