

When Should I Issue a Steroid Emergency Alert Card?

Each item listed below gives the drugs and doses which require a Steroid Emergency Alert Card to be issued. Decisions to issue cards should be made for each patient individually and specialists may suggest an alternate course of action. Steroid cards should be carried for 12 months after stopping treatment.

Patients may be on 2 or more steroid items which cumulatively would warrant them to have an alert card so this must be calculated. See overleaf for example of how to do this

Oral:	Prednisolone ≥5mg daily*	Any PO steroid > 3 courses in 12 months
	Dexamethasone ≥0.5mg daily*	Hydrocortisone ≥15mg daily*
* > 4 weeks duration	Budesonide ≥1.5mg daily*	Methylprednisolone ≥4mg*
	Fludrocortisone ≥0.1mg daily**	Deflazacort ≥6mg daily*
	Beclometasone ≥625mcg daily*	Betametasone ≥750mcg daily*

Inhaled ONLY:	Beclometasone >1000mcg daily <i>(Clenil/Soprobeq/Easyhaler)</i>	Extra Fine Beclometasone >500mcg daily* <i>(Fostair/Trimbow/Qvar/Kelhale)</i>
NB: Patients may be using MART therapy	Budesonide >1000mcg daily <i>(Symbicort/Fobumix/Duoesp, etc)</i>	Ciclesonide >320mcg daily <i>(Alvesco)</i>
	Fluticasone Furoate >100mcg daily <i>(Trelegy/Relvar Ellipta)</i>	Fluticasone propionate >500mcg daily <i>(Seretide/AirFluSal/Sirdupla/Flixotide/Fusacomb etc)</i>
		Mometasone >800mcg per day <i>(Asmanex)</i>

Inhaled in combination with any steroid nasal spray, steroid injection, potent or very potent topical steroid:		
	Beclometasone >800mcg daily <i>(Clenil/Soprobeq/Easyhaler)</i>	Extra Fine Beclometasone >400mcg daily * <i>(Qvar/Kelhale Fostair/Trimbow)</i>
	Budesonide >800mcg daily <i>(Symbicort/Fobumix/Duoesp, etc)</i>	Ciclesonide >320mcg daily <i>(Alvesco)</i>
	Fluticasone Furoate >100mcg daily <i>(Trelegy/Relvar Ellipta)</i>	Fluticasone propionate >400mcg daily <i>(Seretide/AirFluSal/Sirdupla/Flixotide/Fusacomb etc)</i>
		Mometasone >400mcg per day <i>(Asmanex)</i>

Nasal:	Fluticasone furoate 27.5mcg 4 sprays per day for > 7 days <i>(Avamys)</i>
	Fluticasone propionate 400mcg/unit drops 2 nasules per day <i>(Flixonase nasules)</i>
	<i>Note: other nasal sprays do not reach threshold at standard licensed dose*</i>

Rectal:	Prednisolone rectal foam/suppositories ≥5mg per day <i>(Suppositories/foam enema/rectal solution)</i>
	Budesonide enema/rectal foam ≥2mg per day <i>(Budenofalk/Entocort)</i>
	<i>Note: other rectal preparations do not reach threshold at standard licensed doses</i>

Topical:	Very potent -200g per week*
	Clobetasol 0.05% (all forms) <i>(Dermovate/Clobaderm/Etrivex)</i>
	Potent - 200g per week*
	Betamethasone (all strengths/formulations/salts) <i>(Diprosone/Betnovate/Bettamouse /Diprosalic/Fucibet/Dovobet/Enstilar/Lotriderm/Dalonev/Betacap/Audavate)</i>
	Fluocinolone acetonide 0.05% (all forms) <i>(Synalar/Synalar C)</i>
	Fluocinonide 0.05% (all forms) <i>(Metosyn/Metosyn FAPG)</i>
	Fluticasone propionate 0.05% (all forms) <i>(Cutivate)</i>
	Hydrocortisone butyrate 0.1% (all forms) <i>(Locoid)</i>
	Mometasone 0.1% (all forms) <i>(Elocon)</i>
	If any of the above treatments are applied to rectal or genital areas at a dose of ≥30g per month, a steroid emergency card should be issued

* NB. Figures quoted are from SPS article [\(1\)](#) ** NB. Fludrocortisone acetate is a mineralocorticoid and therefore the glucocorticoid effects are lower ⁽²⁾.

Injections: ≥3 intra-articular/IM glucocorticoid injections in last 12 months

Eye/Ear Drops: Prednisolone 0.5% ≥1ml (~20 drops) per day for > 7 days

(Minims/generic)

Prednisolone 1% ≥0.5ml (~10 drops) per day for > 7 days

(Pred Forte)

Note: other drops do not reach threshold at standard licensed doses

It may be helpful to know threshold doses for other nasal preparations to help calculate cumulative steroid doses:

Nasal:	Beclometasone >1000mcg daily (Beconsae/Nasobec)	Budesonide >64mcg daily (Rhinocort Aqua)
	Fluticasone propionate >500mcg daily (Flixonase/Nasofan/Pirinase)	Triamcinolone 4mg daily (Nasacort)
	Mometasone furoate >500mcg daily (Nasonex)	

If any patients are on these medicines + a steroid (at ANY dose) a steroid emergency card should be given:

Clarithromycin – continuous treatment	Atazanavir
Itraconazole	Darunavir
Ketoconazole	Fosamprenavir
Voriconazole	Ritonavir (+/- lopinavir)
Posaconazole	Saquinavir
	Tipranavir

Cumulative dose calculation

Many patients will be taking a combination of steroid products. In this case we must attempt to estimate the equivalent total steroid dose by calculating the ratio of the dose taken compared to the threshold dose. See below for worked example.

Worked example 1:

Patient is prescribed prednisolone 2.5mg daily and Fluticasone furoate nasal spray 27.5mcg 2 sprays per day.

Prednisolone 2.5mg is 0.5 threshold dose. Fluticasone furoate 2 sprays per day is 0.5 threshold dose.

$0.5 + 0.5 = 1.0$ threshold dose.

Therefore issue steroid emergency alert card

Worked example 2:

Patient is prescribed beclometasone nasal spray 2 sprays BD (200mcg), Clenil 100 inhaler 1 puff BD (200mcg) and oral prednisolone 3mg daily.

Nasal spray is 0.2 threshold dose. Inhaler is 0.2 threshold dose. Prednisolone is 0.6 threshold dose

$0.2 + 0.2 + 0.6 = 1.0$ threshold dose

Therefore issue a steroid emergency card

Please note:

All patients with primary adrenal insufficiency, such as those with Addison's disease, congenital adrenal hyperplasia, and hypothalamo-pituitary damage from tumors or surgery will need a steroid emergency card. This crib sheet will help to distinguish which other patients may need a steroid emergency card due to being prescribed oral, inhaled or topical steroids for other medical conditions. Full patient safety alert can be found here:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/NPSA-Emergency-Steroid-Card-FINAL-2.3.pdf>

References 1) Erskine, D. and Simpson, H., 2021. Exogenous steroids treatment in adults. Adrenal insufficiency and adrenal crisis-who is at risk and how should they be managed safely. [online] www.sps.nhs.uk. Available at <https://www.sps.nhs.uk/articles/advice-on-issuing-the-steroid-emergency-card-update-23rd-december-2020/> Accessed 28/10/ 2021. **2)** PrescQIPP, 2021. Implementing the Steroid Emergency Card National Patient Safety Alert [online] (<https://www.prescqipp.info/umbraco/surface/authorisedmediasurface/index?url=%2fmedia%2f5633%2fimplementing-the-steroid-card-safety-advice-v24-hot-topic-july-2021.pdf>).pdf Accessed 28/10/2021