

Dexamethasone for croup

Consumer Information Sheet

This leaflet answers some common questions about dexamethasone. If you have any concerns about this medicine, talk to your doctor or pharmacist. Keep this leaflet with the medicine.

DO NOT give this medicine to anyone who is allergic to dexamethasone. Some of the signs of an allergic reaction may include skin rash, itching or hives; swelling of the face, lips, mouth or throat which may cause difficulty in swallowing or breathing; wheezing or shortness of breath.

Dexamethasone is available as:

Liquid medicines: 1 mg per 1 mL

What is dexamethasone used for?

Dexamethasone is used to treat allergy or inflammation type symptoms associated with many different conditions, such as croup.

Dexamethasone is from a family of medicines known as steroids.

Before your child starts to take dexamethasone:

Tell your child's doctor if your child:

- Has ever had an allergic reaction to any other medications in the past
- Has adrenal gland, liver, stomach or eye problems
- Has any medical conditions or health problems, including diabetes or tuberculosis
- Is taking any other medications

How to give dexamethasone:

Dexamethasone is usually given once a day, preferably in the morning.

Dexamethasone should be given with or after food to help reduce stomach upset.



Liquid medicines:

- Give oral liquid as directed by your doctor or pharmacist. The amount (dose) is specific for your child. The directions on how to give this medication will be shown on the medicine label.
- **Shake the liquid well** then measure out the right amount using an oral syringe.
- Make sure the whole dose is swallowed each time.

If your child only requires one further dose of dexamethasone at home, you may be provided with a single pre-measured dose in a capped syringe. When it is time for your child to have their dose, remove the cap and give the dexamethasone as directed on the label.

When should the medicine start working?

When given to treat croup, dexamethasone should start to work within an hour but it may take up to 4 hours for your child's breathing to return to normal. During this time closely observe and do what you can to keep your child calm.

It is important that your child has the **whole course of medicine that has been prescribed**. This means that they must take the medicine for the number of days that the doctor has told them to or the number of days that is written on the medicine label. Do not stop early even if your child feels better.

What if my child vomits after a dose?

If your child has a large vomit less than 30 minutes after having a dose of dexamethasone, give them the same dose again.

If your child has a large vomit more than 30 minutes after having a dose of dexamethasone, you **do not** need to give the dose again. Wait until the next normal dose.

What if I forget to give it?

If it is almost time to give the next dose, skip the dose you missed and give the next dose when you are meant to.

Otherwise, give the dose as soon as you remember and then go back to giving the medicine as you would normally.

Do not give a double dose to make up for the dose that you missed.

Are there any possible side-effects?

We use medicines to make our children better, but sometimes they have other effects that we don't want (side-effects).

It is unlikely that your child will have any side-effects after only one or two doses of dexamethasone for croup.

Side-effects you must do something about:

If your child gets a skin rash or itching, is short of breath or is wheezing, or their face, lips or tongue start to swell, they may be allergic to dexamethasone. **Take your child to hospital or call an ambulance straight away on 000 (24-hour service).**

Other side-effects you need to know about:

- They may feel sick, get hiccups, or have stomach pain. Giving the medicine with some food may help.
- This medication may affect mood, for example your child may feel more happy or sad than usual. It may also cause problems with sleeping; talk to your doctor if you have any concerns

There may, sometimes, be other side-effects that are not listed above. Tell your child's doctor if you notice anything unusual and are concerned.

Where should I keep this medicine?

Dexamethasone mixture should be kept at room temperature, in a cool dry place (below 25°C)

Make sure that children cannot see or reach the medicine.

Keep the medicine in the container it came in.

See pack details on when to dispose of the oral liquid after opening. Return any old or unused medication to your local pharmacy for safe disposal.

Important information

Only give the medicine to the child it was prescribed for. Never give it to anyone else, even if their condition appears to be the same, as it could do harm.

Keep medicines out of reach of children.

In case of overdose or poisoning, contact

**Poisons Information Centre on 13 11 26
(24-hour service)**

For more information

SA Pharmacy Medicines Information Service
Monday to Friday, 9 am to 5 pm
Telephone: (08) 8161 7555



Health
Southern Adelaide
Local Health Network