



COVID-19 UPDATE

PHARMACY PROCESS

SHORTAGE OF DEXAMETHASONE AND POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVES

Availability

Due to the unprecedented high demand dexamethasone is under controlled. Please plan for possible stock shortages.

Appropriate use of dexamethasone in COVID-19

On the basis of the results of the RECOVERY trial, a randomised controlled study, dexamethasone is recommended for the following **hospitalised** patients with COVID-19:

- Those receiving invasive mechanical ventilation or
- Oxygen support

Please use the recommend dose in order to ensure that we can treat the maximum number of patients.

Recommended dose for up to 10 days: **6 mg dexamethasone IV once daily**.^{1,2,3}

Ordering options

- Order on a regular basis to secure stock
- Use alternative generic options if your usual option is not available.

Alternative corticosteroids and equivalent dosing¹

- 80mg hydrocortisone IV BD
- 32mg methylprednisolone PO / IV once daily
- 40mg Prednisone P.O. once daily
- 6mg dexamethasone PO once daily (Section 21 – SAHPRA approval needed as the oral dose is not registered in SA)

References

1. COVID-19 Treatment Guidelines Panel. Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Treatment Guidelines. National Institutes of Health. Available at <https://www.covid19treatmentguidelines.nih.gov/immune-based-therapy/immunomodulators/corticosteroids/> Effect of Dexamethasone in Hospitalized Patients with COVID-19 – Preliminary Report. RECOVERY Collaborative Group* Statement from the Chief Investigators of the RECOVERY Trial on dexamethasone, 16 June 2020: <https://www.recoverytrial.net/news/low-cost-dexamethasone-reduces-death-by-up-to-one-third-in-hospitalised-patients-with-severe-respiratory-complications-of-covid-19>
2. Circular H111 Of 2020 - The RECOVERY Study: Interim Guidance on the use of steroids in Covid-19 patients
3. Lexicomp Online. 2020