How to Prepare and Inject Dexamethasone

Injectable Dexamethasone
This is a hand-out about how to prepare and inject Dexamethasone.

Please review the steps every few months so that you are ready if an injection is needed.

When to give injectable stress dosing
• Whenever your child cannot take hydrocortisone by mouth
• Whenever your child vomits more than once
• Whenever your child is weak, unconscious or cannot wake up easily
Whenever your child is severely injured, or appears very ill (pale, sweaty, slow to respond)

In these situations, give the injection of medicine FIRST and then call
Doctor________________
Phone number ___________
Emergency number 911

Dosage
If your child is
• 3 years old and older: give all of the medicine (1 ml)
• Less than 3 years old: give half the medicine (0.5 ml)
• Only give the amount prescribed by your doctor or nurse.

Storage and Replacement
Keep stress dosing supplies together and ready to use (example: in a small plastic container)

Supplies you will need:
• vial(s) of Dexamethasone
• syringes and needles
• alcohol wipes
• this handout

Unused vials: Store at room temperature (less than 86° F) in a dark, dry area.
Opened vials: After the vial is opened, label the vial with the date and time. Once opened, the solution is good for only 3 days. Keep it at room temperature.
Expiration dates: Vials of Dexamethasone have expiration dates. Be sure to check these dates. Call for a new prescription if the date is near.

How to Prepare a Dose of Dexamethasone

Supplies
• 1 vial of Dexamethasone solution,
• alcohol wipe,
• 3ml syringe
• ____ inch needle

Steps to get Injection Ready
1. Wash your hands.
2. Remove the plastic tab on the top of the bottle.
3. Wipe the top of rubber stopper with an alcohol wipe.
4. Connect the needle and syringe. To draw air into syringe, pull plunger of the syringe down to the ____ml mark. Remove the needle cap and insert needle straight through the center of the stopper until you see the needle tip. Inject air into the vial. Do not remove the needle.
5. Turn the vial and syringe upside down. Keeping the tip of the needle inside the liquid medicine, draw up ____ml of medicine into the syringe.
6. Remove the needle and syringe from the vial. If you notice any large air bubbles
in the syringe, point the needle upright and carefully press on plunger until the air space is gone. You are now ready to inject the Dexamethasone.

**How to Inject**
1. Pick an injection site on the thigh (see picture).
2. Clean the site with an alcohol wipe.
3. Hold syringe like a dart at a 90° angle to the site.
4. With your other hand, hold the muscle firmly at the site.
5. Insert the needle straight into the skin with a quick firm motion.
6. Slowly push down on plunger until the syringe is empty.
7. Remove the needle quickly (at the same angle it was inserted). Apply gentle pressure to site with alcohol wipe, cotton ball, or gauze. The site may bleed a bit.
8. Throw out the needle and syringe in a puncture proof container (like a liquid detergent bottle or Sharps® container).

The Spanish version of this *Health Facts for You* is #5909s

*For more information, see “Guidelines for the Child Who Is Cortisol Dependent”, HFFY #4424.*