

Corticosteroids

Last updated: June 2021

NICE GUIDANCE: Offer dexamethasone to people with COVID-19 who:

- need supplemental oxygen to meet their prescribed oxygen saturation levels or
- have a level of hypoxia that needs supplemental oxygen but who are unable to have or tolerate it.

****For adults with COVID-19 not needing supplemental oxygen, corticosteroids may increase the need for invasive mechanical ventilation and death within 28 days of starting treatment.****

Dosing

Adults:

Dexamethasone (tablets or liquid) PO 6 mg OD for up to 10 days (stop on discharge)

If no oral access use Dexamethasone IV (3.3mg/ml): **Dose** = 1.8ml (5.94mg) OD for up to 10 days

Suitable Alternatives:

- **Prednisolone:** 40mg orally once a day for 10 days
- **Hydrocortisone:** 50 mg every 8 hours intravenously for 10 days (0.5ml of 100mg/ml solution; powder for solution for injection or infusion is also available); this may be continued for up to 28 days for people with septic shock.

Treatment should stop if discharged from hospital within the 10 days

Children:

Dosage for children with a greater than 44-week corrected gestational age

- **Dexamethasone:** 150micrograms/kg (as a base) orally, nasogastrically or intravenously once a day for 10 days (max. 6 mg)
- **Prednisolone:** 1mg/kg orally, nasogastrically or intravenously once a day for 10 days (max. 40mg; doses can be rounder as per routine clinically practice)

For children able to swallow and in whom there are no significant concerns about enteral absorption, prescribe tablets. Only use intravenous administration when tablets or oral solutions are inappropriate or unavailable.

Dosage for preterm babies with a corrected gestational age of less than 44 weeks

Seek specialist advice.

Pregnancy

[RCOG guidelines state:](#) "Corticosteroid therapy should be considered for 10 days or up to discharge, whichever is sooner, for women who are unwell with COVID-19 and requiring oxygen supplementation or ventilatory support.

One suggested steroid regimen is:

- If steroids are not indicated for fetal lung maturity, oral prednisolone 40 mg once a day, or IV hydrocortisone 80 mg twice daily, for 10 days or until discharge, whichever is sooner.
- If steroids are indicated for fetal lung maturity, intramuscular dexamethasone 6 mg every 12 hours for four doses, then oral prednisolone 40 mg once a day, or IV hydrocortisone 80 mg twice daily, to complete a total of 10 days or until discharge, whichever is sooner.

Interaction checker

<https://www.covid19-druginteractions.org/checker>

Gastroprotection

Where there is history of GI ulceration or patients are at a higher risk of a bleed, consider prescribing gastroprotection for the duration of the corticosteroid course

References

[NICE guidelines](#)

[CMO letter](#)

[WHO](#)