

What Is Addison's?

Addison's Disease is a rare hormonal disorder which affects approximately 6 to 11 per 100,000 people. It affects men and women alike and occurs in all age groups, including children.

Addison's disease is caused mainly by an autoimmune reaction of your body, trauma with hemorrhage into the adrenals and surgery. Fungus infections as well as carcinoma can also be the cause. Formerly a large percentage of Addison's disease was caused by tuberculosis.

Addison's disease occurs when there is chronic primary adrenal insufficiency or when the adrenal glands, the small glands that are located above each kidney, cease to function properly, this is also referred to as hypoadrenalism.

The adrenal glands are made up of two parts; the inner part called the medulla, which regulates epinephrine commonly known as adrenaline, which is produced in times of stress. The inner part is usually not affected by Addison's Disease. The outer part, the more critical is the adrenal cortex and it produces many hormones, the two more important ones being cortisol and aldosterone. These hormones are necessary to sustain life.

Cortisol belongs to a family of hormones called glucocorticoids which help maintain blood pressure and cardiovascular function. It also helps mobilize nutrients and modify the body's response to inflammation. It also helps balance the effects of insulin in breaking down sugar for energy and helps regulate the metabolism of proteins, carbohydrates and fats and also helps the body to respond to stress.

Aldosterone belongs to a family of hormones called mineralocorticoids and it helps to maintain proper electrolyte balance including sodium (salt) and potassium balance.



The Canadian Addison Society is a registered health related charity organization offering support for persons with Addison's disease and other forms of Adrenal Insufficiency. There are local support groups in a number of communities across Canada.

If you would like more information about our organization and our support groups, please feel free to contact us.

Donations above the cost of membership are tax deductible as The Canadian Addison Society is designated as a registered charitable organization under the Income Tax Act of Canada by the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), # 87248 5511 RR0001.

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The Canadian Addison Society



Have You Been Diagnosed With

Addison's Disease

(Primary Adrenal Insufficiency)

Or a form of

**Secondary
Adrenal Insufficiency**

With appropriate testing by your Endocrinologist?

WE CAN HELP!!

We Offer Support and Information

**IMPORTANT
EMERGENCY INFORMATION INSIDE**

**Some of the typical symptoms of
Addison's Disease:**

Chronic fatigue and muscle weakness
Lethargy
Bronze discoloration of the skin
Craving for salt or salty foods
Loss of appetite
Nausea and vomiting
Constipation or diarrhea
Abdominal discomfort, and/or pain
Weight loss
Low blood pressure
Dizziness on standing, fainting
Mental confusion and irritability

Treatment

Addison's disease is treated by replacing the missing adrenal hormones, most often with hydrocortisone (cortisol) and in most cases, Fludrocortisone acetate (Florinef).

Secondary Adrenal Insufficiency may not require Fludrocortisone acetate (Florinef).

These are oral medications which must be taken daily and in cases of illness, injury or emotional upset, increased doses may be required. Stressful situations, such as surgery or more severe medical illness, will require emergency management.

Autoimmune Addison's disease can frequently be associated with other autoimmune diseases. Thyroid disease is the most common, occurring in 50% of cases. Less commonly associated diseases include diabetes mellitus, gonadal failure (ovaries), colitis, underactive parathyroid glands and pernicious anaemia.

There is no cure for Addison's disease, but with proper daily replacement medications and regular monitoring by a specialist, an Addisonian can live a somewhat normal lifestyle.

A person with Addison's disease/Adrenal Insufficiency should always carry his/her medical identification card as well as an Emergency Injection Kit (see next panel).

In addition, wearing a MedicAlert bracelet in case of injury or an Addisonian/Adrenal crisis is essential.

Research is ongoing in the search for improved methods of treatment for Addison's (Primary Adrenal Insufficiency) as well as the many forms of Secondary Adrenal Insufficiency

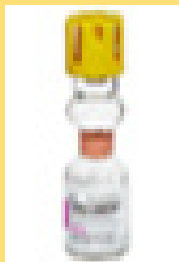
This Educational / Awareness Brochure was made possible partially as the result of funding assistance provided by Pfizer Canada

Emergency Injection Kit

The Canadian Addison Society recommends you always carry with you, an Emergency Injection Kit. As there are no pre-assembled kits on the market, you will have to gather the various components of this kit yourself.

First, it is recommended that your doctor provide you with a prescription for Solu-Cortef in either a 6 pack or 10 pack of the 2 ml, 100 mg, Pfizer Act-O-Vial. Multiple vials and syringes/needles are recommended so you may assemble several kits. One to have at home, one or more to carry with you, one at Grandma's house, at school, at work, etc.

Each Kit should contain the following items:



1 Act-O-Vial of Solu-Cortef

1 or 2 syringe/needles 3 ml, 22G, 1 1/2" for Intramuscular Injection (one as a backup - use a smaller I/M version for pediatric use)

2 Alcohol wipes, 1 gauze pad, 1 Band-Aid

Select a container of a convenient size in which to carry this kit. Keep away from extreme heat or cold.

Please refer to our website for instructions on the use of this kit.

Following are some of the Signs and Symptoms that may be apparent in an Addisonian Crisis / Adrenal Crisis:

Vomiting
Diarrhea
Headache
Dizziness
Low back pain
Low Blood Pressure
Shock-like symptoms
Confusion
Low Blood Sugar
Loss of appetite

Benefits of Membership...

Why should you join?

Be part of a support network of people who know what you mean when you say, I've hit the "energy wall" and don't know what to do! Meet people who can offer personal suggestions on how to manage your condition. Our membership includes people who have lived with Addison's disease for 50 years!

The Canadian Addison Society's website offers links to the latest information on Addison's disease and Adrenal Insufficiency in general. You will be able to ask the Society's Medical Advisor, an Endocrinologist, your questions about Addison's disease. You will support education of medical personnel on how to treat an Addisonian in a crisis.

If you have recently been diagnosed with Addison's disease, you need support! Talking with others who share your disease is essential to understanding how to live with it. The Canadian Addison Society can introduce you to people in your area who share your experience, and are able to offer suggestions on how to not only survive Addison's disease, but also thrive.

Unlike diabetes, there is no simple daily blood check to help regulate the dose of medication required. Get the benefit from "old timers" who can talk from real experience about when they adjust their medication for certain life situations, as well as the need to work with your endocrinologist.

If you are a family member of a person living with Addison's disease, you are living with someone who needs you to know about the treatment of his or her condition. You may need to save their life in a crisis. Learn to recognize the signs of crisis or under-medication, learn how to inject them with Solu-Cortef if needed, learn about why they crave salt and get tired easily. Learn how to live with an Addisonian!

A quarterly Newsletter is produced by the Society volunteers and made available by mail or a direct email to your Inbox. The Newsletter will keep you in-touch with other members and offer you the latest information regarding Addison's disease.