

Adrenal Insufficiency (Including Addison's Disease)

The adrenal glands sit atop the kidneys. *Primary* adrenal insufficiency occurs when the adrenal glands do not produce enough of a hormone called cortisol and, in some cases, not enough aldosterone. Tuberculosis used to be the main cause of this disease but now accounts for only 20% of these cases. It is believed that an autoimmune disorder is the main cause. Addison's disease results in the gradual destruction of the adrenal cortex. This disease is characterized by weight loss, muscle weakness, fatigue, low blood pressure, and darkening of the skin. Addison's disease is frequently accompanied by other autoimmune processes, such as pernicious anemia or hypothyroidism. Other causes of adrenal insufficiency include metastatic tumors, intra-adrenal hemorrhage, hemochromatosis, and surgical excision of the adrenal glands. The most specific test for diagnosing adrenal insufficiency is the ACTH stimulation test. Treatment is hydrocortisone, and if aldosterone is also deficient, fludrocortisone (Florinef) is added. *Secondary* adrenal insufficiency is due to either 1) inadequate secretion of ACTH by the pituitary gland or 2) abrupt withdrawal of prednisone that has been administered over a long period of time for other illnesses (such as asthma).

If your client has adrenal insufficiency or Addison's disease, please answer the following:

1. Please list date of diagnosis:

2. Is your client on any medications?
If yes, please give details

3. Has your client ever been hospitalized for Addison's disease or secondary adrenal insufficiency?
If yes, please give details

4. Has your client been prescribed steroids for any other illness?
If yes, please give details

5. Has your client smoked cigarettes or used any form of tobacco in the last five years?

If yes, please give details

6. Does your client have any other major health problems (ex: cancer, etc.)?

If yes, please give details and send the appropriate questionnaire.
