

FDA/CPED/PRO/20/0006

17th June 2020

SAFETY ALERT ON DEXAMETHASONE USE IN COVID-19

The Food and Drugs Authority (FDA) wishes to caution the general public about the underlisted in spite of the preliminary results from the RECOVERY Trial in the United Kingdom which revealed that dexamethasone is able to reduce deaths in patients on ventilators and oxygen.

1. Dexamethasone is shown to be beneficial **ONLY** in preventing some deaths in COVID-19 patients on ventilators and oxygen and not asymptomatic or mild to moderately ill patients.
2. Dexamethasone is a corticosteroid and is classified a Prescription-Only-Medicine and should only be prescribed and used under medical supervision in COVID-19 or for any other disease.
3. Dexamethasone suppresses the immune system, and in the UK study, this effect was beneficial and needed in order to suppress the clinically problematic excessive immune reaction in severe and critical COVID-19 cases.
4. Dexamethasone should therefore **NOT** under any circumstances be used for the prevention of COVID-19 as its potential to suppress the immune system will counteract the body's natural function to fight against COVID-19 and other infections in long term use.

Dexamethasone is a corticosteroid medicine that can only be prescribed by a licensed medical practitioner for specific indications and can have some serious side effects.


The public is therefore cautioned against the purchase, stocking and use of dexamethasone or any other corticosteroid medicine unless certified by healthcare professionals.

The general public is assured that the Ministry of Health's Provisional Standard Treatment Guideline for Novel Coronavirus Infection (2020) has already made provisions for this category of patients by including another corticosteroid which will be used for similar indication should the need arise.


The public is therefore advised to follow the measures announced by the Ministry of Health which are listed to reduce the risk of being infected with COVID-19:

- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth
- Stay home and only go out if necessary
- Wear a face mask in public places
- Frequently wash your hand with soap under running water
- Use FDA registered alcohol-based hand sanitizers as frequently as required
- Maintain social distancing

All concerns and questions arising out of this publication as well as any other FDA regulated product can be directed to the FDA on the following contacts;

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Signed
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