



OFFICE of the DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER  
MINISTRY for HEALTH

15, PALAZZO CASTELLANIA, MERCHANTS STREET, VALLETTA, MALTA

**DH Circular 83/2018**

DH 1235/2018

3<sup>rd</sup> October 2018

**Attention All:** Consultants  
Medical Officers  
Pharmacists  
Pharmacy Technicians  
Nurses

**Re: Hydrocortisone Foam Enema**

Hydrocortisone foam enema is a rectal corticosteroid foam indicated for ulcerative colitis, proctosigmoiditis and granular proctitis.

The Health Department is encountering problems to procure hydrocortisone foam enema because of manufacturing issues. These issues are expected to resolve in the first quarter of 2019. It might therefore be necessary that when the current stock of hydrocortisone foam is exhausted, patients on this steroid be prescribed an alternative rectal steroid preparation until hydrocortisone foam is back in stock.

Other corticosteroids for rectal use on the Government Formulary List are prednisolone retention enema and budesonide foam enema. The table below summarizes the properties of the three preparations.

	Indications	Dose	Formulary entitlement		
			Pink card	Schedule V	Protocol regulated
<b>Hydrocortisone 10% w/w foam enema</b>	Ulcerative colitis, proctosigmoiditis and granular proctitis	One applicatorful inserted into the rectum once or twice daily for 2 to 3 weeks and every second day thereafter.	Yes	Inflammatory Bowel Disease	No
<b>Prednisolone 20mg/100mL retention enema</b>	Rectal and rectosigmoidal disease in ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease.	One enema used nightly, for 2 to 4 weeks. Treatment may be continued in patients showing progressive improvement, but it should not be persisted with if the response has been inadequate. Some patients may relapse after an interval but are likely to respond equally well to a repeated course of treatment.	No	Inflammatory Bowel Disease  Malignant Diseases	No
<b>Budesonide 2mg/dose rectal foam</b>	Active ulcerative colitis that is limited to the rectum and the	One actuation of 2 mg budesonide daily in the morning or evening. An acute episode generally subsides after 6 to 8	No	Inflammatory Bowel Disease	<a href="#">MP 24</a>

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	sigmoid colon.	weeks. Budesonide 2mg rectal foam should not be used after this period of time.			
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For further information, please refer to the online [Outpatients Formulary List](#).

Due regard should be given to potential serious side effects from using corticosteroid rectal preparations continuously for a long time.

For your attention please.

Dr. Denis Vella Baldacchino  
Chief Medical Officer