Date:

Pt name

Pt address

Dear Patient

**This letter is your guide to the New NHS Steroid Emergency Card**.

You have been given a New Steroid Emergency Card by the NHS. This new card is for all patients that are taking steroids or are having steroid injections for medical conditions.

When you take steroids regularly your body becomes dependent on them, and you may need more steroids if you become unwell. You must keep the New Steroid Emergency Card safely and always carry it with you while you are having steroid treatment and for 12 months after you stop taking steroids.

(NB Healthcare professional to delete below as appropriate **before the letter is given to the patient**.)

You have been given the new Steroid Emergency Card because:

* You take/receive regular courses/doses of steroid (s) called

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* You are taking/receiving long-term steroid (s) called ……………..……………………………………………………………………………….
* You have stopped taking/receiving steroid (s) called ………..…………………………………………………….during the last 12 months.
* You have received 3 or more intra-articular/intramuscular steroid injections within the last 12 months.
* You have received 1 or more intra-articular/intramuscular steroid injections within the last 12 months and are also on a long term steroid as above.

**Question: What are steroids?**

**Answer:** Steroids are medicines used to treat many different conditions. They work by reducing inflammation and helping to control your immune system. If you stop having steroid treatment, it can take up to 12 months for your body to recover fully and start to make its own natural steroid.

**Question: Are there any risks from taking or receiving steroids?**

**Answer:** There are some side effects which should have been explained to you. It is very important for any healthcare professional who treats you to know that you are having steroid treatment or that you have stopped having it during the last 12 months.

You should NOT suddenly stop the steroid treatment if you are having it regularlyas this may make you feel very unwell. It could cause weakness, dizziness, tiredness, sickness, poor appetite, weight loss or stomach pain.

**Question: What should I do if I begin to feel ill when I am at home?**

**Answer:** If you have a regular dose of steroids above a certain level, you may also need ‘sick day’ information. This tells you what to do if you begin to feel ill when you are at home. ’Sick day’ information is not necessary for all patients, so please ask your GP whether you need to have it.

**In an emergency, if you are seriously unwell get urgent medical help as if you have steroids regularly, you may need to go to hospital for urgent treatment.**

**Question: What do I need to do with my New NHS Emergency Steroid Card?**

**Answer:** You need to:

* Complete the new card with your own details.
* Always have the card with you while you are having steroid treatment.
* Have the card with you for 12 months after stopping your treatment.
* Keep the card in a safe place, for example in your purse or wallet.
* Show the card to any healthcare professional you have an appointment with.
* Tell your family or carers that you have a New NHS Steroid Emergency Card.

**If you need emergency treatment, it is very important for your family or carers to inform the emergency services that you have a New NHS Emergency Steroid Card.**

**Question: If I have lost my New Steroid Emergency Card, where can I get another one from?**

**Answer:**

* You can get another Steroid Emergency Card to complete from your GP practice, community pharmacy or hospital.
* You can download an electronic card to complete from: [steroid-card.pdf (endocrinology.org)](https://www.endocrinology.org/media/3873/steroid-card.pdf)

You can screenshot the new Steroid Emergency Card to save your own card or have it as a screensaver on your smart phone. For more information on how to do this, go to: <https://www.addisonsdisease.org.uk/news/new-nhs-steroid-card-released>

**If you have any other questions about the New Steroid Emergency Card, please contact your GP or Pharmacist for advice.**