

Addison's disease

What is it?

Addison's disease is a hormonal disorder also known as an endocrine disorder that occurs at all ages and affects both male and female.

Addison's disease occurs when the adrenal glands, situated just above the kidneys, do not produce enough of the following 2 hormones:

1. Cortisol

Helps the body respond to and handle stress

Helps balance the effect of insulin in breaking down sugar for energy

Helps slow the immune system's inflammatory response

Helps maintain blood pressure and heart function

Helps regulate metabolism of protein, carbohydrate and fat in the body

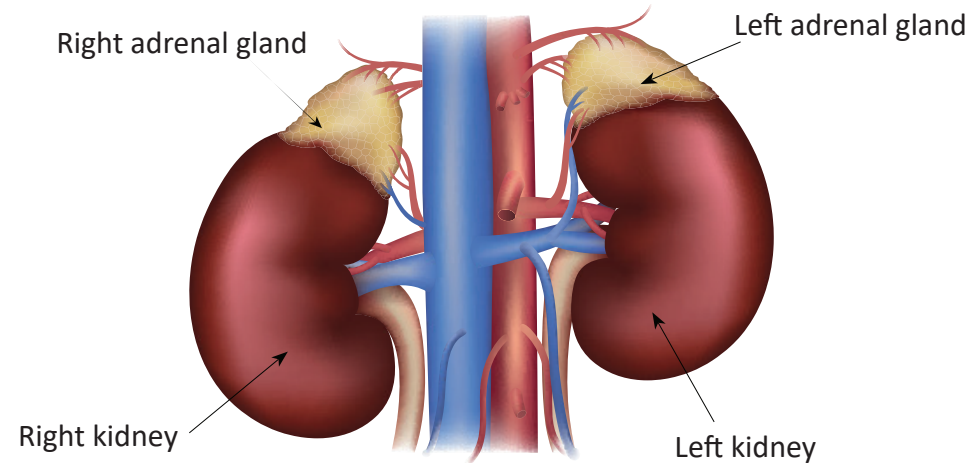
Helps regulate metabolism of protein, carbohydrate and fat in the body

2. Aldosterone

Helps maintain blood pressure, water and salt balance in the body

When aldosterone production is too low, kidneys can't regulate water and salt balance in the body

Cut-section of adrenal gland



Causes

PRIMARY

Gradual destruction of the adrenal cortex (the outer layer of the adrenal glands) by the body's own immune system (body produces white blood cells to destroy its own cells).

TB – Tuberculosis

Amyloidosis, a group of diseases resulting from abnormal deposition of certain proteins (amyloids) in various areas of the body.

When the **adrenal glands are removed** in an operation.

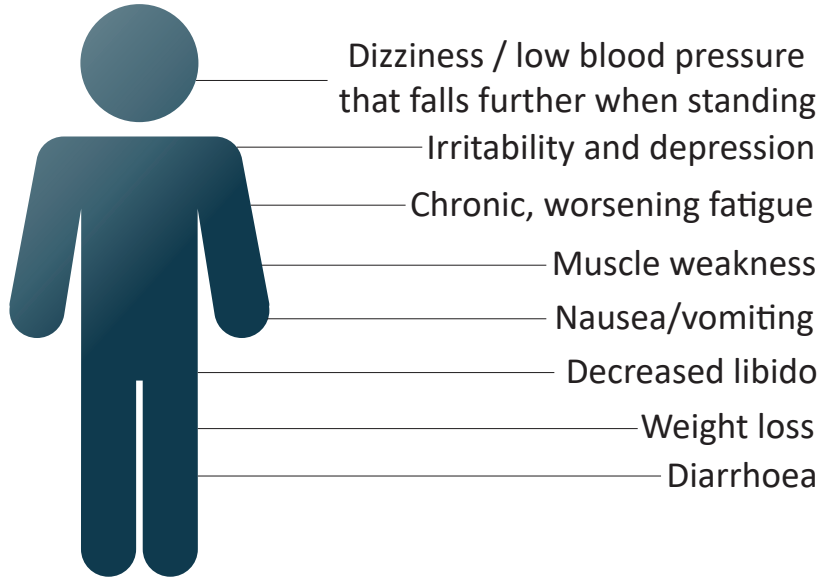
SECONDARY

Lack of ACTH – Adrenocorticotrophic hormone.






Removal of non-cancerous ACTH-producing tumours of the pituitary glands.

When the pituitary **gland reduces in size**.

Signs and symptoms



Addisonian crisis


-  Loss of consciousness
-  Sudden penetrating pain in the lower back, abdomen or legs
-  Dehydration
-  Severe vomiting and diarrhoea
-  Low blood pressure





Lifestyle Changes





Management

 When member can take oral fluid and oral medication, increase gradually as you decrease hydrocortisone and IV fluid. Movement can also be gradually increased

 During Addisonian crisis, standard therapy involves IV injections of hydrocortisone, salt water (saline) and sugar (dextrose)

 Cortisone (cortisol) is the main treatment and should be taken with food to prevent stomach irritation

 Member should lie flat on back with legs elevated

 Specific hormone therapy to replenish any shortages