

Growth Hormone Treatment

Storage of Growth Hormone

Incorrect storage can reduce the effectiveness of the growth hormone injections. As growth hormone is susceptible to temperature extremes, please store it according to the manufacturer's guidelines.

If travelling with Growth Hormone, please seek the advice of your Endocrinologist or Endocrine Nurse on the appropriate storage requirements.

Travelling with Growth Hormone

Before travelling: Organise to carry a letter and current prescription detailing:

- what the medicine is,
- how much you are taking and
- state that the medicine is for personal use of your child.

Make sure that you leave all medication in its original packaging with the dispensing label attached and always take it as hand luggage.

Consult with your airline for advice on maintaining cold storage of your medication and refer to the CMI of your medication for proper storage temperatures.

For further information you should contact your Endocrine Nurse and visit the Dept of Health website: <https://www.tga.gov.au/leaving-australia>

References:

1. Services Australia. Growth hormone deficiency - paediatric patients. <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/growth-hormone-deficiency-childhood-onset-or-late-onset?context=23021> Accessed on October 2022.
2. Schedule of Pharmaceutical Benefits Section 100 - Items Available under Special Arrangement Volume 2 June 2022. <https://www.pbs.gov.au/publication/schedule/2022/06/2022-06-01-general-schedule-volume-2.pdf>. Accessed October 2022.
3. PBS Growth Hormone Program Frequently Asked Questions. <https://www.pbs.gov.au/general/changes-to-certain-s100-programs/PBS-Growth-Hormone-Program-FAQ-1-January-2020.pdf>. Accessed October 2022.
4. Hormones Australia Endocrine Society of Australia - Growth Hormone Deficiency. <https://www.hormones-australia.org.au/endocrine-diseases/growth-hormone-deficiency/>. Accessed June 2022.
5. Therapeutic Goods Administration. Leaving Australia. <https://www.tga.gov.au/leaving-australia>. Accessed October 2022.

Support Organisations:

Hormones Australia

www.hormones-australia.org.au

Australian Pituitary Foundation

www.pituitary.asn.au

Turner Syndrome Association of Australia

www.turnersyndrome.org.au

Prader-Willi Syndrome Australia

www.pws.org.au

Doctor:

Phone:

Clinic Nurses:

Phone:

Pharmacy:

Phone:

Merck would like to thank and acknowledge the Endocrine Nurses Society of Australasia (ENSA) Education Committee, for their input in developing this resource.

The information provided in this brochure is general information and should be used only as an aid in understanding health problems or medical conditions and is not a substitute for professional medical advice or treatment for special medical conditions.

A physician or healthcare professional should always be consulted for any health problem or medical condition.



Merck Healthcare Pty Ltd | ABN 72 006 900 830
Suite 1 | Level 1 | Building B | 11 Talavera Road |
Macquarie Park NSW 2113 | Australia
Phone: 1800 257 348

Date of preparation: November 2022 | AU-NONE-00011

Growth Hormone Treatment

Information Sheet

For patients prescribed
Growth Hormone treatment.

Information sheet endorsed by:



Growth Hormone Treatment

To be considered for Growth Hormone

Before the supply of Growth Hormone can be provided through the public health system, your child must meet certain guidelines.

To be considered for Growth Hormone therapy a child must have a condition approved to qualify for Growth Hormone, or be short (under the first centile for height on a growth chart) and growing slowly.

A Growth Specialist (Endocrinologist) may recommend your child start on Growth Hormone based on many factors. These will include a complete evaluation of their growth pattern over a 6-12 month period depending on their age, general health, medical and family history, bone age x-ray, growth hormone test results and diagnosis.

How the System Works

If your child is eligible to receive treatment an application is made to Department of Health, Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) who approve the use of Growth Hormone.

The PBS will assess the application, approve the prescription and notify the treating doctor, who will then forward the prescription onto you. This process usually takes up to 4 weeks.

There are many brands of growth hormone available in Australia and all growth hormone needs to be given by injection. The decision as to which is the most appropriate product for your child will be made in consultation with your Endocrinologist and Endocrine Nurse.

What happens next?

Once you have received the prescription you should take it to your local pharmacy who will order the growth hormone and injection consumables (needle tips and disposal containers).

The initial order may require your chemist to set up an account with the pharmaceutical company. This may mean that the growth hormone could take approximately 10 days to arrive for the first order, but future orders should be available usually within a week.

Refer to your Growth Hormone's Consumer Medicine Information (CMI) for further information and ask your doctor if you have any questions about your treatment.

Once you have your supply, you should contact your child's clinic and make an appointment to learn how to give the growth hormone injections.

Giving Growth Hormone

Growth Hormone needs to be given as a subcutaneous injection (through the skin and into the fat layer underneath). This is because it is a protein and if taken by mouth, it is destroyed by stomach acid. It can be injected using various injection pen devices. These injections are mostly painless.

Daily Growth Hormone injections should be taken 6-7 days a week. Weekly Growth Hormone injections, should be given on the same day each week. Missed doses will prevent your child from having the best possible response and may result in the PBS discontinuing approval for treatment.

Growth Hormone is ineffective if it is not given as prescribed.

Who gives the injections?

This is a very individual decision and dependant on, the age of your child, who is home at injection time, and may vary with each family. Some very young children will be keen to try to do their own injection and some teenagers may not want to be involved at all!

Generally children over the age of 8 years will be able to manage some part of the procedure. It doesn't matter how young or old your child is, the procedure **should always be directly supervised by an adult** to confirm that the technique is correct and the injection is given

When to give the injections

As our body makes most Growth Hormone at night, ideally the injections should be given in the evening before bed. It is also easier to remember if it is given at the same time each evening. Making it part of your regular routine before bedtime along with brushing teeth etc., may make it easier.

Where to give the injections

The injection can be given as a subcutaneous injection into the thighs, the abdomen, and buttocks. Sites must be changed regularly to avoid injecting into the same area too frequently.

Process for ordering Growth Hormone

Each order covers a 6 month period. The initial order is sent as a 16 week supply, with 1 repeat, making a total supply of 32 weeks.

Families should ask their pharmacy to order the repeat part of the prescription when they have 2-3 weeks supply left at home.

Continuing supplies, after the initial 6 month period, will then be for 13 weeks + 1 repeat, making a total supply of 26 weeks.

Remember: The script must be processed within 6 months of being written as it will expire after that.

Continuing Treatment

Once on treatment your child's response needs to be regularly assessed. They will need to be measured every 3-6 months and a reapplication to continue treatment made to the PBS every 6 months by your doctor.

This means that **follow up appointments with your specialist doctor need to be booked well in advance.**

You should make sure that you have an appointment **at least 4-6 weeks before Growth Hormone is due to run out.**

Patients should not go without Growth Hormone unless they have checked with their specialist or nurse first.

As Growth Hormone is expensive, supply is carefully monitored with each re-application.

Stopping Growth Hormone

Growth hormone may be stopped if your child has:

- A poor growth response on the maximum allowed dose.
- Reached the 10th adult height centile (female 155.0cm, male 167.7cm), except for those with biochemical Growth Hormone deficiency.
- Reached a bone age of 15½ years in boys or 13½ years in girls (by this time they have completed most of their growth).
- Those with biochemical Growth Hormone deficiency who have completed their growth may continue treatment at a smaller (adult) dose.
- Children with Prader-Willi Syndrome (PWS) may continue treatment until 18yrs.