

# ADDISON'S DISEASE

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## DEFINITION

- Addison's disease, also called adrenal insufficiency, is an uncommon disorder that occurs when body doesn't produce enough of certain hormones. In Addison's disease, adrenal glands produce too little cortisol and, often, too little aldosterone

# INCIDENCE

- Addison's disease occurs :

All age groups

Both sexes

can be life-threatening.

## CAUSES: PRIMARY

- In an autoimmune disease, your body's immune system mistakes any organ or area of the body for a virus, bacteria, or another outside invader.
- Other causes of primary adrenal insufficiency include:
- prolonged administration of glucocorticoids (e.g. prednisone)
- infections in your body
- cancer and abnormal growths (tumors)
- certain blood thinners used to control clotting in the blood

## SECONDARY

- There are also many other causes of secondary adrenal insufficiency, including:
  - tumors
  - medications
  - genetics
  - traumatic brain injury

## RISK FACTORS

- Cancer
- Take anticoagulants (blood thinners)
- Have chronic infections like tuberculosis
- Had surgery to remove any part of your adrenal gland
- Have an autoimmune disease, like type 1 diabetes or Graves' disease

## **SYMPTOMS**

- Extreme fatigue
- Weight loss and decreased appetite
- Darkening of your skin (hyperpigmentation)
- Low blood pressure, even fainting
- Salt craving
- Low blood sugar (hypoglycemia)
- Nausea, diarrhea or vomiting (gastrointestinal symptoms)
- Abdominal pain
- Muscle or joint pains
- Irritability
- Depression or other behavioral symptoms
- Body hair loss or sexual dysfunction in women

# DIAGNOSIS

- **Complete history collection & Physical examination:** perform a physical exam. Dark patches on your skin might be a clue for your doctor to consider testing for Addison's disease.
- Assess serum electrolyte levels : potassium and sodium levels.
- **Blood tests:** These will be done to measure the levels of sodium, potassium, cortisol and ACTH in your blood.
- **ACTH stimulation test:** This tests the adrenal glands' response after you are given a shot of artificial ACTH. If the adrenal glands produce low levels of cortisol after the shot, they may not be functioning properly.
- **X-rays:** These may be done to look for calcium deposits on the adrenal glands.



## CONTD....

- Computed tomography (CT scan):  
Computed tomography uses computers to combine many X-ray images into cross-sectional views. A CT scan might be done to evaluate the adrenals and/or pituitary gland. For example, it can show if the immune system has damaged the adrenal glands or if the glands are infected.

Addisonian crisis causes:

- low blood pressure,
- high potassium in the blood, and
- low blood sugar levels.

## TREATMENT

- Hydrocortisone pills to replace cortisol.
- If patient also lacking aldosterone, fludrocortisone acetate pills will be provided.
- If patient are taking fludrocortisone, need to increase salt intake, especially in hot and humid weather and after exercise.
- In emergencies and during surgery, the medicine is given intravenously (directly into a vein).

**THANK YOU**