

Information on Pharmaceutical Products for Management of COVID-19

Background

The outbreak of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has been declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) and the virus has now spread to many countries and territories¹. Towards this UNICEF with partners seeks to improve access to medicines and products for diagnosis and treatment of COVID -19 particularly in low and middle-income countries in both humanitarian (emergency) and development settings.

On 2nd September 2020, World Health Organization (WHO) published guidance for clinicians and health care decision-makers on the use of corticosteroids in patients with COVID-19².

WHO guideline has made a strong recommendation for use of systemic (i.e. intravenous or oral) corticosteroid therapy (e.g. **6 mg of dexamethasone orally or intravenously daily** or 50 mg of hydrocortisone intravenously every 8 hours) for 7 to 10 days **ONLY in patients with severe and critical COVID-19, and a conditional recommendation not to use corticosteroid therapy in patients with non-severe COVID-19²**.

Please note that Dexamethasone products offered through UNICEF can be used for other approved clinical indications besides COVID.

Purpose


The purpose of this bulletin is to provide information on Dexamethasone products available from UNICEF SD.

Product Range

In order to support expanded access to dexamethasone for low- and middle-income countries and ensure early access to required therapeutics in the COVID-19 response, UNICEF has following Dexamethasone products in its portfolio.


Dexamethasone 6 mg Tablet

Once a daily single dose, 6 mg tablet for dosage convenience and patient compliance.

Material Number	Material Description
S1514144 	<p>Dexamethasone 6 mg tabs/PAC-10x10</p> <p>Each scored tablet contains 6 mg Dexamethasone. Packing: 10x 10 tablets (i.e. 10 blister cards with 10 tablets, 100 tablets in total.) Please refer, https://supply.unicef.org/s1514144.html</p> <p>Packaging language text: English & French Weight and volume of each pack (100 tablets): Gross weight: 0.0462 kg; Gross volume: 0.000168 m³; Dimensions: 50 mm x 91 mm x 37 mm</p>


Dexamethasone 4 mg Tablet

For dosage flexibility & titration, offering scored tablets of Dexamethasone 4 mg. These scored tablets can be divided into two equal parts, each containing 2 mg Dexamethasone.

Material Number	Material Description
S1514141 	<p>Dexamethasone 4 mg tabs/PAC-10x10</p> <p>Each scored tablet contains 4mg Dexamethasone. Packing: 10x 10 tablets (i.e. 10 blister cards with 10 tablets, 100 tablets in total.) Please refer, https://supply.unicef.org/s1514141.html</p> <p>Packaging language text: English Weight and volume of each pack (100 tablets): Gross weight: 0.041 kg; Gross volume: 0.0002 m³; Dimensions: 47 mm x 60 mm x 100 mm</p>


Dexamethasone Phosphate 4 mg/mL Injection

Pack size of 50 ampoules of 1 mL each are available.

Material Number	Material Description
S1523005 	<p>Dexamethasone Phos 4mg/ml 1ml amp/BOX-50</p> <p>Each mL of Dexamethasone solution for injection contains 4 mg of Dexamethasone Phosphate equivalent to 3.3 mg of Dexamethasone base. Ampoule content should be used immediately after breaking the ampoule. Any unused portion should be discarded immediately after use. Packing: Box containing 50 glass ampoules of 1 mL each. Please refer, https://supply.unicef.org/s1523005.html</p> <p>Packaging language text: English & French Weight and volume of each box (50 ampoules): Gross weight: 0.21 kg; Gross volume: 0.0007737m³; Dimensions : 118 mm x 79 mm x 83 mm</p>

Dexamethasone Phosphate 4 mg/mL Injection

Pack size of 10 ampoules of 1 mL each are available.

Material Number	Material Description
S1514140 	<p>Dexamethasone Phos 4mg/ml 1ml amp/BOX-10</p> <p>Each mL of Dexamethasone solution for injection contains 4 mg of Dexamethasone Phosphate equivalent to 3.3 mg of Dexamethasone base. Ampoule content should be used immediately after breaking the ampoule. Any unused portion should be discarded immediately after use. Packing: Box containing 10 glass ampoules of 1 mL each. Please refer, https://supply.unicef.org/s1514140.html</p> <p>Packaging language text: English Weight and volume of each box (10 ampoules): Gross weight: 0,048 kg; Gross volume: 0,0002 m³; Dimensions : 79,5mm x 78,5 mm x 31,5mm</p>

Guideline²

Total number of Blister Strips/Tablets required per patient

Number of blister Strips (10 tablets per strip) or tablets required for each Patient with severe and critical COVID-19.

Tablet strengths offered	No. of tablets per blister Strip	No. of tablets required per day	No. of treatment days	No. of tablets required for treatment for 10 days
6 mg Tablet	10 tablets (Each tablet contains 6 mg Dexamethasone)	One tablet of 6 mg (Once daily)	10	10 tablets (One blister strip)
4 mg Tablet	10 tablets (Each scored tablet contains 4 mg Dexamethasone)	One and a half tablet of 4 mg = 6 mg dose	10	15 tablets (One and a half blister strip)

Total number of ampoules of 1 mL required per patient

Number of ampoules of 1 mL required for each Patient with severe and critical COVID-19.

Ampoule	No. of ampoules required for per day dose of 6 mg Dexamethasone base	No. of treatment days	No. of 1 mL ampoules required for treatment for 10 days
<i>Each ampoule of 1 mL contains 4 mg of Dexamethasone Phosphate equivalent to 3.3 mg Dexamethasone base.</i>	Two ampoules of 1 mL (Each 1 mL ampoule is equivalent to 3.3 mg Dexamethasone base) so 2 ampoules of 1 mL x 3.3 mg Dexamethasone base per ampoule = 6.6 mg Dexamethasone base against the required dose of 6 mg (1.8 mL) Dexamethasone base. Any unused portion should be discarded immediately after use.	10	20 Ampoules of 1 mL each. (Ampoule of 1mL containing 4mg of Dexamethasone Phosphate equivalent to 3.3 mg Dexamethasone base)

For more information contact: UNICEF Supply Division, Medicines & Nutrition Centre at rkshirsagar@unicef.org

Guideline for Use:

As per the WHO guidelines:

- Corticosteroids for COVID-19, Living guidance, 2 September 2020. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-2019-nCoV-Corticosteroids-2020.1>
- Q&A: Dexamethasone and COVID-19. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2020. <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/question-and-answers-hub/q-a-detail/q-a-dexamethasone-and-covid-19>

References

- COVID-19 Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) Global research and innovation forum, 12 February 2020. [https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/covid-19-public-health-emergency-of-international-concern-\(pheic\)-global-research-and-innovation-forum](https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/covid-19-public-health-emergency-of-international-concern-(pheic)-global-research-and-innovation-forum)
- Corticosteroids for COVID-19, Living guidance, 2 September 2020. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-2019-nCoV-Corticosteroids-2020.1>

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