

Adrenal crisis is a life threatening emergency caused by the adrenal glands inability to produce sufficient cortisol in response to major stress. Adrenal insufficiency occurs when the adrenal glands are unable to produce sufficient mineralocorticoid or glucocorticoid hormones.

Types of Adrenal Insufficiency:

- 1. Primary:** Diseases of the adrenal gland e.g. Addison’s Disease, Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia (CAS), Adrenoleukodystrophy
- 2. Secondary:** Diseases of the pituitary gland (ACTH deficiency) or hypothalamus e.g. Hypopituitarism; Craniopharyngioma/other suprasellar tumours; and head injuries
- 3. Iatrogenic (chronic corticosteroid treatment):** e.g. Crohn’s disease, Juvenile arthritis, SLE, Asthma, Nephrotic syndrome, Haemangiomas

An ADRENAL CRISIS can be precipitated by a significant illness, trauma or stress: High fevers, serious infection, diarrhoea, vomiting (possible dehydration), lethargy, pallor, drowsiness, mental confusion, or sustaining a serious injury, e.g. fractures; head injuries; and/or non-compliance with medications. If left untreated, it can be fatal.

Treatment:

