

Growth Hormone Treatment – A Guide for Families
Division of Pediatric Endocrinology & Diabetes
Lucile Packard Children’s Hospital Stanford

Introduction

Growth hormone requires a major commitment of effort and resources for you and your insurance company. Our endocrine doctors and nurses will work hard to get this treatment for your child but we need your help and patience in this process as well. This sheet outlines the process of getting started on growth hormone and renewing your prescriptions.

Getting Started

Once you and your doctors have agreed that growth hormone is appropriate for your child, we will start the application process. This will NOT happen overnight! It takes typically 8-12 weeks to obtain approval from your insurance company and to get the growth hormone shipped to your home via the drug supplier.

What YOU need to do

- **Read and sign the Growth Hormone consent form.** This explains the side effects of growth hormone. Please be sure to ask your doctors about any concerns or questions you may have. **We will not apply for growth hormone until we have this form back from you.**
- Give us accurate and complete information about your insurance company (name of policy holder, contact phone numbers, etc.)
- **Be patient!** Insurance approval or denial can take **weeks or months** depending on your insurance carrier. We will try our best to get insurance approval but it takes time. Many carriers deny GH and we may have to go through several appeals which takes even more time.

What WE will do

- File a Statement of Medical Necessity form explaining why growth hormone is needed.
- Send a prescription to your pharmacy provider as required by your insurance policy.
- Give the insurance company whatever medical information is needed. Some companies require additional x-rays or blood tests. We will contact you if we need to get these done. Please arrange for them promptly.

Growth Hormone Teaching

Once we obtain approval for growth hormone and it is shipped, you will need a teaching session to learn how to give the shots. This usually takes only about one hour. **Your insurance will cover a teaching session.** A nurse from growth hormone company or pharmacy representative will contact you and set up a teaching session in your home.

What YOU need to do

- Keep us updated if your insurance carrier changes
- Call with any questions or concerns about growth hormone side effects
- Set up an appointment in clinic for **3 months** after starting growth hormone. We need to see your child for exams every 3 months in the first year of growth hormone use. Visits will be every 6 months after that.

Getting Refills for Your Growth Hormone

Running out of GH is **not** an urgent medical issue (unless you have a baby with panhypopituitarism). We like children to get growth hormone daily but if there is a lapse in coverage that is OK. We will work on it with you. Please plan ahead for your growth hormone refills. Refills for growth hormone is NOT as easy as refilling other medications. All requests from your pharmacy or insurance company **MUST be faxed to us at 650-725-8375.**

You must plan ahead because it can easily take 4-8 weeks to get refills.

Many insurance companies require re-authorization every six months. This is the same time-consuming process that we go through at the start of treatment. If you change insurance companies, we are required by your insurance company to start the authorization process anew – and this can take 4-8 weeks.

What YOU need to do

- **Plan ahead.** Ask for refills well in advance of when you will run out.
- Provide us with all the information about your insurance company, who to contact, etc. Your insurance company or pharmacy must contact us by FAX at 650-725-8375 for any additional information they need to refill your prescription.
- If you change insurance companies, expect that the refill process may take 8-12 weeks.
- **Keep your follow up appointments in Endocrine Clinic. We cannot renew your growth hormone prescription if we do not see you every 3 – 6 months.**

For questions regarding growth hormone prescriptions or teaching, please contact Eileen Durham at (650) 723-6053. She is not in the office every day but will return your call as quickly as possible. Fax any needed documents to 650-725-8375.

To schedule appointments for Endocrine Clinic call (650) 721-1811.