**Addison's disease**

Also called adrenal insufficiency, addison's disease is a disorder that occurs when the body produces insufficient amounts of certain hormones produced by the adrenal glands. In Addison's disease, adrenal glands produce too little cortisol and often insufficient levels of aldosterone as well., Addison's disease occurs in all age groups and affects both sexes. Addison's disease can be life-threatening.

**The adrenal glands**

The adrenal glands are small hormone-releasing organs located on top of each kidney. They are made up of an outer portion, called the cortex, and an inner portion, called the medulla.

**The cortex produces three hormones:**

1. Glucocorticoid hormones (such as cortisol) maintain sugar (glucose) control.
2. Mineralocorticoid hormones (such as aldosterone) regulate sodium and potassium balance.
3. Sex hormones, androgens (male) and estrogens (female), affect sexual development.

**Causes of addison disease**

Addison disease results from damage to the adrenal cortex (autoimmune disease, Infections such as tuberculosis, HIV, or fungal infections Hemorrhage into the adrenal glands and tumors). The damage causes the cortex to produce hormone levels that are too low.

**Clinical sign**

1. Chronic diarrhea, nausea, and vomiting.
2. Darkening of the skin in some places, causing the skin to look patchy.
3. Dehydration.
4. Dizziness when standing up.
5. Decrease in heart rate or blood pressure
6. Low blood sugar levels.
7. Paleness and salt craving.
8. Extreme weakness, fatigue, and slow, sluggish movement.
9. Mouth lesions on the inside of a cheek (buccal mucosa).
10. Weight loss with reduced appetite.

**Diagnosis:**

1. Blood test: measuring the blood levels of sodium, potassium, cortisol and ACTH.
2. ACTH stimulation test: This test involves measuring the level of cortisol in the blood before and after an injection of synthetic ACTH. ACTH signals the adrenal glands to produce cortisol.
3. (CT) scan of the abdomen to check the size of adrenal glands.

**Treatment**

Corticosteroids to replace cortisols not secreted by the adrenal glands. Hydrocortisone tablets and prednisone tablets.