Henoch Schonlein Purpura in Children



What is Henoch Schönlein Purpura?



Henoch Schönlein purpura (HSP) is a disease characterised by "vasculitis" where small blood vessels called capillaries become inflamed and damaged, producing a rash on the skin called 'purpura'. We do not know exactly what causes HSP, but it seems to follow on from some viral or bacterial infections such as a cold or respiratory tract infection. It may represent an unusual reaction of body's immune system to these triggers. HSP is not an inherited disease and is not contagious.

It is named after the doctors who first described the disease and is often referred to as HSP for short. Children between the ages of 2 and 11 years old seem to develop HSP more than younger or older children, and it seems to affect slightly higher numbers of boys than girls.

What are the symptoms?

The symptoms are due to inflamed blood vessels and mainly affect four areas of the body and can come and go for several weeks or even months in some cases. To make the diagnosis, all of the features need not be present.

- **Skin affected in all cases** A
  purple-red rash, which does not turn white when pressed.
  In some cases this rash can turn into ulcers the rash is usually over the backs of the limbs, especially the legs and buttocks, which can also be swollen. Skin may appear swollen, scrotal swelling can develop.
- **Digestive system**
  Tummy aches and pains which can be severe and occasionally result in blood in the stool.
- **Joints**
  Painful and swollen joints can occur due to inflammation, usually affecting the knees and ankles.
- **Kidneys**
  Protein and blood may be found in the urine due to inflammation in the kidneys.
  Often this will resolve as your child gets better but can be a more serious long-term problem and will need careful monitoring.

How is it diagnosed?

HSP is usually diagnosed by looking at your child's history of symptoms and with a physical examination. They will always need blood pressure and a urine dip test. Some patients may require blood tests. In rare circumstances there is a lot of blood and protein in the urine, very high blood pressure, or other blood test markers of kidney damage, a kidney biopsy will be required.

How is it treated?

There is no specific treatment for HSP other than rest and recuperation, and symptoms usually go away within several weeks. Paracetamol or ibuprofen can be given to relieve any joint pains. Steroids are occasionally used in children with severe symptoms.

Children with HSP will have follow-up arranged in outpatient clinics. They will need urine dip tests to be done at home and also when they come to clinics. Urine dipsticks will be dispensed at the time of discharge from the hospital and how urine dip results are interpreted will be demonstrated at discharge from the hospital.

compassionate care

What is the outlook for children with HSP?

Usually HSP is a mild illness which resolves spontaneously and most children make a full recovery, in a very small number of children HSP can cause serious bowel or kidney problems. Relapses (usually milder than the first attack) can occur in about half of the children in the following months. HSP does not cause long term problems in vast majority of children, but there is risk of chronic kidney disease in around 1% of children with HSP. All children will receive at least one follow up with a doctor to make sure there are no long term kidney problems. Children with kidney involvement may need further investigations and regular longer term reviews by a doctor. It is important to attend follow-up appointments even if well, for monitoring urine dip results and blood pressure. This will help in early detection of kidney disease.

Is there a support group?

Henoch Schönlein Purpura Support Group
Tel: 01733 204368 Email: hsphelp@inbox.com
https://contact.org.uk/conditions/henoch-schonlein-purpura/

Henoch Schonlein Purpura can also be referred to as IGA Vasculitis

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If you have any comments about this leaflet or the service you have received you can contact :

Community Nursing Team
Telephone 01484344357
Email: childrenscommunity@cht.nhs.uk

www.cht.nhs.uk

If you would like this information in another format or language contact the above.

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