



Henoch-Shonlein Purpura (HSP) Information for Parents

What is HSP?

HSP is a vascular disease affecting blood vessels that can cause swelling and inflammation in the veins and arteries. This can affect the blood vessels in the skin, intestines (gut) joints and kidneys. The exact cause of HSP is unknown. It often follows a viral infection, such as a cold, or an allergy. Most children with HSP get better without any treatment.

What are the symptoms?

- Your child may have a rash that often looks like dark bruising under the skin, starting on the lower legs and spreading higher up the body.
- Swelling may occur on the hands, feet or face.
- Your child may have tummy ache or feel sick.
- Very occasionally your child may have bleeding within the intestines and pass dark faeces (stools).
- HSP can affect the kidneys. The doctor will check if the kidneys have been affected by testing for the presence of blood and protein in the urine. If this happens it can be treated medically.

HSP can occur in children aged between 6 months and 16 years, but is most common in children between the ages of 2 and 11 years.

What treatment is available?

There is not usually any specific treatment that can be given.

Paracetamol can be given to help relieve painful joints and tummy ache. Occasionally the doctor may prescribe steroids for a severe tummy ache.

Some children may be admitted to hospital. Your child's urine is tested for blood and protein, and a specimen sent to the laboratory to test for infection.

A specimen of blood may be taken for tests.

What can I expect when I take my child home?

Most children will stay in hospital no more than a few days and will recover completely within a month.

Your child can go back to school when you think they are ready. This is usually when they are pain free and back to normal.

Some children may have further attacks of HSP for the next 2-3 years.

Your nurse will show you how to test your child's urine for blood and protein before you go home. Inform your family doctor if there is +++ blood or protein in the urine. The doctor may need to send your child back to the hospital.

The doctor will see your child in the children's out patient department and discuss any results and further treatment with you.

If you need further advice ring

Starlight children's ward Tel : 0161 291 2248/2669

Paediatric Observation and Assessment ward Tel : 0161 291 5459

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