

How to Care for Your Child with a Henoch-Schoenlein Purpura (HSP)

This leaflet will provide you with information about HSP (IgA vasculitis) causes, symptoms, diagnosis, treatment and home care advice.

Henoch-Schönlein purpura (IgA vasculitis)



What is HSP (IgA vasculitis)?

- HSP (IgA vasculitis) is a kind of sickness where the blood vessels in your child's body become swollen and sore. It most commonly occurs in children from 3 to 15 years of age. However, it can occur in all age groups.
- It cannot be passed on to other people.
- Usually, it goes away on its own in about 4 to 6 weeks without long-term complications.
- Children who have had HSP (IgA vasculitis) once might get it again.

What are the causes of HSP (IgA Vasculitis)?

- The exact cause of HSP is not well known, but it is believed to involve an abnormal immune system response, it may be triggered by a preceding viral illness such as a sore throat, cough or cold.

What are the symptoms of HSP (IgA vasculitis)?

- **Skin rash** One of the hallmark signs of HSP is a purplish rash that typically appears on the buttocks, legs, arms and face. It occurs when the small blood vessels become inflamed and swollen to form a small reddish or purple raised spot, sometimes like a small bruise (called Purpura).
- **Joints pain** occur especially in the knees, ankles and elbow joint. This joint pain can range from mild to severe.
- **Abdominal pain** sometimes associated with nausea, vomiting and loose stool.
 - o In rare cases, an abnormal folding of the bowel called intussusception can occur, this makes a blockage in your child intestines that may need urgent intervention.
 - o Blood in the stool or urine can occur when the blood vessels in the bowel and kidneys become inflamed, leading to bleeding when your child has a bowel movement or urinates.
- **Kidney Involvement:** In some cases, HSP can affect the kidneys, leading to blood or protein in the urine. This is a serious problem that needs medical attention.

How HSP (IgA vasculitis) is Diagnosed?

- If your child experiences the above symptoms, a healthcare provider will make a diagnosis based on:

- **Symptoms:** The presence of a purplish rash, joint pain, and abdominal discomfort.
- **Physical Examination:** A thorough physical examination to check for specific signs associated with HSP.
- **Laboratory Tests:** Blood and urine tests to assess kidney function and look for markers of inflammation.
- **Biopsy (very rarely required):** In some cases, a small sample of affected tissue may be examined under a microscope to confirm the diagnosis.

How HSP (IgA Vasculitis) is treated?

- There is no specific treatment for HSP (IgA vasculitis). Treatment for HSP focuses on relieving symptoms and preventing complications.
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- **Pain Relief:** Over-the-counter pain relievers like acetaminophen or ibuprofen can help manage joint pain and discomfort.
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- **Rest and Fluids:** adequate rest and hydration can support your child recovery.
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- **Corticosteroids:** Sometimes in severe cases, doctors may choose to give medicines like steroid (prednisolone) to reduce inflammation, this can help children with severe inflammation.
- **Follow up appointments:**
 - Your doctor will advise you on the duration of follow up.
 - Your doctor may want to test urine and check your child blood pressure regularly for the first few weeks.
 - Once the rash and joint pains have settled, your doctor may want to continue to check urine samples after that to check for any kidney problems.
 - The follow up normally continue until there is no blood or protein on the urine test.

Home care advice:

- **To help manage HSP:**
 - o **Follow Your child doctor advices:** Take any prescribed medications as directed and attend follow-up appointments.
 - o **Keep your child well Hydrated:** encourage your child to drink plenty of fluids to support your child healing process.
 - o **Rest:** Give your child adequate rest to ensure full recovery.
 - o **Watch for complications:** Be aware of any changes in symptoms and report them promptly to your doctor.

When should I seek medical advice?

- If your child's urine is red, rusty or blood colored.
- If the joint swelling is very painful and especially if it stops your child walking.
- If your child has severe tummy pain
- If your child keeps vomiting
- If there is blood in your child's stool.
- If your child's testicles are swollen or painful.
- If you feel that your child is not well.