

Patient information: Henoch-Schönlein purpura (HSP, IgA vasculitis)

What is Henoch-Schönlein purpura (HSP, IgA vasculitis)?

Henoch-Schönlein purpura (also known as IgA vasculitis), is often called HSP for short. Vasculitis means inflammation of tiny blood vessels. IgA is a protein in your body that usually protects your body from infections. In this condition, the IgA protein causes damage to the small blood vessels in your body. HSP is a condition that usually causes a rash, joint pain, belly pain, and can sometimes affect the kidneys. The rash usually looks like tiny raised bruises but can have other patterns. HSP can affect children between the ages of 3 and 15, but it can affect adults, too.

What are the symptoms of HSP (IgAV)?

The symptoms of HSP usually go away on their own in about a month. In some children the symptoms may return and keep coming and going for a few years. The symptoms can include:

- A rash that looks like tiny raised bruises
- Pain or swelling in the joints
- Belly pain

The rash caused by HSP (IgAV) is usually the first sign of the disorder, but not everyone gets a rash. Sometimes the first signs are pain and inflammation in the joints. Some children also have problems with their stomach or intestines. For example, some children have nausea or vomiting.

HSP can also cause problems with the kidneys, pain in the scrotum (in boys), and other organs. HSP usually causes symptoms only for a month or so. Then it goes away without causing any long-term problems. Some people may have lasting kidney problems.

How is HSP (IgAV) treated?

Treatment involves getting plenty of fluids, resting, and taking medicines to control pain, if they are needed. Most people can stay at home until they get better. People who have severe symptoms sometimes need to be treated in the hospital.

How does HSP affect the Kidneys?

About 20% of children with HSP will have problems with their kidneys. This can result in small amounts of blood or protein in the urine. When the kidneys are involved, sometimes other medicines are needed.