



UNC
KIDNEY CENTER

Podcast Transcript:

Dr. Ron Falk

Membranous Nephropathy Treatments

“Membranous Treatments: Cholesterol-lowering drugs”

Patient: So I have this syndrome with lots of protein in my urine. Now my doctor tells me that my cholesterol levels are very high and she wants me to take a cholesterol-lowering drug. Will I have to be on this type of treatment forever once I start? Can I lower my cholesterol by changing my diet and maybe not have to take the drugs?

Dr Falk: If you use your magic wand and your membranous nephropathy goes away, then you will not be leaking protein in your urine. Your serum albumin will go back to normal, and your liver will no longer have to make so much protein and will stop making lots of cholesterol as well. So the nephrotic syndrome is not a consequence of what you're eating. It's a consequence of how your body, in particular, your liver is responding to the loss of protein in the urine, and the decrease in the amount of protein in your blood. So dietary changes are helpful, but they can only help to a certain extent because the high cholesterol is not coming from your diet, the high cholesterol is coming because your liver has been fooled into making much more cholesterol than it should.

So in fact, you have to take cholesterol-lowering drugs, as long as you have the nephrotic syndrome. The real key here is to treat the membranous nephropathy, because if you treat the membranous nephropathy, your cholesterol will go down, and you won't have to take those drugs anymore.