

Podcast Transcript:

Dr. Ron Falk

Membranous Nephropathy Treatments

"Membranous Treatments: Toxic Effects of Cyclosporine"

Patient: I've read that cyclosporine might reduce proteinuria, and help

protect my kidney function. But I've also read that it may have toxic effects on my kidney. What kind of toxic effects can it cause to my

kidneys?

Dr Falk: Cyclosporine is a drug that we're using more and more for

glomerular diseases. It has been a tremendous benefit in the treatment of Membranous Nephropathy. It's used to a certain extent with Prednisone, but it has become a mainstay of treatment. It decreases the amount of protein loss in the urine, and if one treats the nephrotic syndrome and treats the Membranous Nephropathy, then kidney function will get better and will stay that way. On the other hand, you're absolutely right. Cyclosporine can be toxic to the

kidney and actually can cause scarring.

But remember, we've used cyclosporine for decades now and patients with kidney transplants. And in that circumstance, we've learned how to use the drug. We use less of it, we give it by divided doses, we watch blood levels of it, and in fact in Membranous Nephropathy we don't have to use as much Cyclosporine as we would use for a transplant. So while the toxicity is real, while the danger is real, watching how much of this drug one's using, watching drug levels carefully, one can really reduce the toxicity to your kidneys.

Remember, people with kidney transplants have been on these drugs for decades. And we continue to use these kinds of drugs for kidney transplant patients because they work so well. We wouldn't use it in Membranous Nephropathy if it weren't working there as well.