

Minimal Change Disease

What is Minimal Change Disease?

Minimal Change Disease is the most common cause of nephrotic syndrome in children. Minimal Change Disease is the diagnosis given when a patient has nephrotic syndrome and the kidney biopsy reveals little or no change to the structure of the kidney filters (glomeruli) or the surrounding kidney tissue.

Who gets Minimal Change Disease?

Children of all ages and even adults can get Minimal Change Disease, though it mostly affects young children under the age of 5. Boys are twice as likely to have it as girls.

What causes Minimal Change Disease?

The cause is not known but researchers are actively trying to learn more.

What are some of the symptoms of Minimal Change Disease?

The most common symptom is swelling around the eyes, face, abdomen and legs. A person with Minimal Change Disease may make less urine, gain weight and become swollen during active phases of the disease.

How is Minimal Changes Disease diagnosed?

With information obtained from blood tests, urine tests and a kidney biopsy, a physician can determine if a patient has Minimal Change Disease.

What is the treatment for Minimal Change Disease?

Usually the doctor will prescribe a drug called prednisone or prednisolone (steroid). Not to worry, this steroid is not the same medication that has been used in the past by some bodybuilders. This drug will help to stop the loss of protein in the urine and decrease the swelling of a person's body. Most patients will improve on this drug after several weeks of treatment. Some patients do not respond to prednisone or prednisolone treatment though and might require additional medications which your doctor will describe to you.

Will the swelling come back?

Unfortunately, many children with Minimal Change Disease will experience a relapse and will need to restart prednisone (steroid) treatment. Eventually, most children outgrow this disease but in some cases the swelling may continue into adulthood. Sometimes, children with Minimal Change Disease develop chronic kidney disease and may need dialysis or kidney transplant. There is no way to know which children will develop chronic kidney disease.