

Henoch Schönlein Purpura (HSP)

An information guide



Henoch Schönlein Purpura (HSP)

Your child has been diagnosed with Henoch Schönlein Purpura (HSP).

This leaflet explains about HSP, what causes it, and how it can be treated.

What is HSP?

HSP is a disease where small blood vessels become inflamed (irritated and swollen). It usually affects the small blood vessels in the skin (called capillaries), but can also affect blood vessels in the bowel and kidneys.

When the blood vessels get inflamed, they can bleed into the skin, causing a rash that is called purpura. There can also be some bleeding in the intestines and the kidneys.

What causes HSP?

The exact cause of HSP is not known, but it seems to follow on from a viral or bacterial infection such as a common cold or throat infection.

HSP is not an inherited disease and is not contagious.

Children between the ages of 2 and 11 years old seem to develop HSP more than younger or older children, and it seems to affect slightly more numbers of boys than girls.

What are the symptoms?

HSP causes a skin rash, and can also cause pain in the joints (such as the knees and ankles), or stomach pain. The rash looks like small bruises or small reddish-brown purple spots.

It is usually seen on the buttocks, lower back, around the elbows and on the legs. Many children with HSP also have some swelling over the top of the feet and backs of the hands, and in boys around the scrotum.

Children with HSP can also have fever, nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea. If the blood vessels in the bowel and the kidneys get inflamed, HSP may cause blood to show in the stools or urine.

Serious kidney problems are rare, but they can occur and will need careful monitoring. In rare cases, an abnormal folding of the bowel, called intussusception, can occur. This causes a blockage in the intestines that may need surgery.

How is HSP diagnosed?

HSP is usually diagnosed from a history of symptoms and a physical examination. Your child may need some blood and urine tests.

How is it treated?

There is no specific treatment needed for most cases of HSP as the symptoms usually get better within several weeks without any treatment.

Anti-inflammatory drugs (such as ibuprofen) and painkillers (such as paracetamol) can help the joint pains, and resting should also help to alleviate any swelling and pain. In addition, antibiotics may be used to treat the infection that triggered HSP.

Very rarely medications like steroids (such as prednisolone) are used if your child has severe abdominal pain or other medications may be needed to stop long standing kidney problems.

What happens to people with HSP?

Usually there are no lasting problems after having HSP, although some people who have had HSP once may get it again.

Children with HSP are monitored for 6 months to look for kidney inflammation by doing urine and blood pressure checks. Regular urine tests weekly for the first 2 months along with blood pressure checks are needed. If the tests are normal it can be done monthly and we can stop monitoring if they remain normal at 6 months.

Children who have blood and protein in the urine will be seen by Consultants in the outpatient clinic and are likely to need regular monitoring. You will be referred to the childrens community team on discharge for help and support at home.

When should you telephone for further medical advice?

- If your child's stomach or joint pain become worse, especially if it stops them walking
- If your son's testicles are swollen or painful
- If your child starts vomiting green fluid or has blood in their stool
- If your child's urine output decreases or becomes very dark or red in colour
- If your child becomes irritable and distressed and refuses fluids
- If you are worried about your child, especially if it is taking a long time for their symptoms to get better.

Contact details for Children's Ward

The Royal Oldham Hospital

Telephone: 0161 627 8866

North Manchester General Hospital

Telephone: 0161 625 8273

HENOCH SCHÖNLEIN PURPURA SUPPORT GROUP

This is a small contact group formed in 2003. It offers a listening ear and, where possible, a link for families of affected children.

c/o Contact a Family
209-211 City Road
LONDON
EC1V 1JN

www.makingcontact.org

Main Telephone Number: 01733 204368

Best time to telephone: 10:00am - 2:00pm

Helpful telephone numbers

NHS 111- Emergency and urgent care services

You may also use this space to record other telephone numbers you may find useful:

GP –

Health visitor –

Community childrens nursing team –

BARDOC/GO TO DOC –

If English is not your first language and you need help, please contact the Interpretation and Translation Service

Jeśli angielski nie jest twoim pierwszym językiem i potrzebujesz pomocy, skontaktuj się z działem tłumaczeń ustnych i pisemnych

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Dacă engleza nu este prima ta limbă și ai nevoie de ajutor, te rugăm să contactezi Serviciul de interpretare și traducere

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For general enquiries please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 0161 604 5897

For enquiries regarding clinic appointments, clinical care and treatment please contact 0161 624 0420 and the Switchboard Operator will put you through to the correct department / service

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