

Henoch-Schönlein Purpura

Patient Information

Child Health Department



The Patient Information Leaflets page on the Trust website is available on the link:
<https://www.wwl.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets> or scan the QR code.

Author ID: MF
Leaflet ref: CH 015
Version: 7
Leaflet title: Henoch-Schönlein Purpura
Last review: March 2022
Expiry Date: March 2024



What is Henoch-Schönlein Purpura (HSP)?

Henoch-Schönlein Purpura (say 'hen-awk shern-line purr-purr-ah') causes blood vessels to get inflamed (irritated and swollen). This inflammation is called vasculitis. It usually affects the small blood vessels in the skin (called capillaries). It can also affect blood vessels in the bowel and the kidneys. When the blood vessels get inflamed, they can bleed into the skin, causing a rash that is called purpura. The intestines and the kidneys may also bleed.

What causes HSP?

HSP is caused when a person's immune system doesn't fight an infection like it's supposed to. It occurs most often in children from two to 11 years of age, but it can occur in anyone. Its exact cause is unknown. It might be triggered by bacterial infections, medicines, insect bites, vaccinations or exposure to chemicals or cold weather. You may catch an infection that caused someone's immune system to respond with HSP, but HSP itself isn't contagious. Doctors don't know how to prevent HSP yet.

What are the symptoms of HSP?

HSP causes a skin rash, pain in the joints (such as the knees and ankles) and stomach pain. The rash looks like small bruises or small reddish-purple spots. It's usually on the buttocks, around the elbows and on the legs. It can also appear in larger areas and look alarming. HSP can also cause fever, nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea. The symptoms usually last for about 4 to 6 weeks. If the blood vessels in the bowel and the kidneys get inflamed, HSP can make you bleed when you have a bowel motion (poo) or when you pass urine (wee). Serious kidney problems don't happen very often, but they can occur. In rare cases, an abnormal folding of the bowel called intussusception (say 'in-tuh-suh-sep-shun') can occur. This causes a blockage in your intestines that might need surgery.

How is HSP treated?

There is no specific treatment for HSP. Medicines can help you feel better and treat an infection that may have triggered HSP. Fortunately, HSP usually gets better without any treatment. Anti-inflammatory medicines, such as ibuprofen can help the pain in your joints. Sometimes medicines like prednisone can help people with severe joint and stomach pain.

What happens to people with HSP?

Most people do fine. Usually, HSP gets better on its own and doesn't cause lasting problems. About half of the people who have had HSP once will get it again. A few people will have kidney damage because of HSP. We may want to check for kidney problems. You may be asked to test your child's urine by a dipstick test at home to monitor for any abnormalities.

Please feel free to ask

If you have any questions or queries, which we have not covered in this leaflet, the staff will be pleased to answer your questions as clearly and honestly as they can.

Rainbow Ward, Tel: 01942 778762, Ward open 24 hours. Please note that we can only give specific advice where we have recently been involved in the care of a child.

Comments, Compliments or Complaints

The Patient Relations/Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) Department provides confidential on the spot advice, information and support to patients, relatives, friends, and carers.

Contact Us

Tel: 01942 822376 (Monday to Friday 9am until 4pm)

The Patient Relations/PALS Manager
Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
Royal Albert Edward Infirmary
Wigan Lane
Wigan
WN1 2NN

Ask 3 Questions

Become more involved in decisions about your healthcare. You may be asked to make choices about your treatment. To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions:

1. What are my options?
2. What are the positives and negatives of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?



How We Use Your Information

For details on how we collect, use, and store the information we hold about you, please see patient information leaflet, Ref. **Corp 006** How we use your information, this can be found on the Patient Information Leaflets page on the Trust website, see details on the front cover.

This leaflet is also available in audio, large print, Braille, and other languages upon request. For more information, please ask in the department/ward.

© Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.
All rights reserved. Not to be reproduced in whole or in part without the permission of the copyright owner.

Call 111 first when it's less urgent than 999.



EMPLOYER RECOGNITION SCHEME

GOLD AWARD 2021

Proudly serving those who serve.

Phone: 0808 802 1212

Text: 81212

www.veteransgateway.org.uk

