

# HSP (Henoch-Schoenlein Purpura)

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## What is HSP?

Henoch-Schonlein Purpura (HSP) is a condition in which blood vessels become inflamed. This inflammation is called vasculitis.

Vasculitis causes irritation and swelling in small vessels in the body, which can cause problems such as bleeding into the skin (resulting in a deep red/purple rash called purpura. It can also affect the bowel and kidneys, and cause joint and abdominal pains.

## Who does it affect?

HSP can affect people of any age, but it is most common in children under 10.

HSP is not usually serious and most cases get better within a few weeks.

## What causes HSP?

HSP is caused by a problem in the immune system, which can occur after a recent infection, such as a viral infection in the throat, airway or lungs. It is not infectious and cannot be passed on to other people.

## What are the signs and symptoms of HSP?

- Red or purple rash which looks like small bruises or reddish purple spots. These are usually found on the buttocks, around the elbows and on the legs, but are occasionally seen on the face and upper body
- Pain in the joints, usually knees and ankles. Joints may also become swollen, tender and warm
- Tummy pain which can develop suddenly before the rash appears
- Blood may be found in the urine, or stool
- Occasionally diarrhoea and vomiting.

## Possible complications of HSP

The main complications of HSP involve the kidneys, and signs of this may not occur for several weeks or months after the other symptoms have passed. There may be blood and/or protein in the urine when it is tested. You may sometimes see discolouration of the urine and protein can cause urine to become frothy. Urine will be tested using a dipstick and sometimes sent to a laboratory to see if there is any kidney involvement. In a very small minority of people affected by HSP, the kidneys become so compromised that they stop working properly (kidney failure). Can also happen rapidly in acute kidney injury. Another complication is high blood pressure, which will be monitored during your child's hospital stay, and followed up by your GP.

Swelling can occur, mainly around the eyes and ankles. HSP can cause swelling and pain in the testicles (orchitis) or an abnormal folding in the intestines in the tummy (intussusception) which can lead to the bowel becoming blocked.

## Treatment

HSP usually settles by itself; common pain relievers such as paracetamol or ibuprofen will be required for joint symptoms. Some children may like to be in bed for a few days until pains settle.

A blood test is often taken to ensure there is nothing serious going on and a throat test is sometimes done to look for a triggering infection; antibiotics are given if necessary.

If the bowel is involved or severe kidney problems occur, then specialist tests such as scans and/or X-rays may be needed. Results will be discussed with you at the next ward round, or sooner if urgent intervention is required.

## What will happen when my child is discharged?

You will probably be shown how to test your child's urine at home, and be given a supply of testing strips to go home with. You will be given a number to contact if the results are abnormal. Follow-up appointments are usually organised to monitor your child for any complications after the initial presentation, and any further treatment required will be explained to you then. All symptoms will generally settle in four to six weeks without any lasting problems. In about half of all cases, symptoms may return for a few weeks or months, especially if further infections occurs. Monitoring can usually stop around six months if no problems develop.

Please do contact Ward 10 on 01493 452010 should you have any concerns.

For further information please visit [www.infokid.org.uk](http://www.infokid.org.uk)

## Feedback

We want your visit to be as comfortable as possible. Please talk to the person in charge if you have any concerns. If the ward/department staff are unable to resolve your concern, please ask for our Patient Advice and Liaison (PALS) information. Please be assured that raising a concern will not impact on your care. **Before you leave the hospital you will be asked to complete a Friends and Family Test feedback card.** Providing your feedback is vital in helping to transform NHS services and to support patient choice.

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The hospital can arrange for an interpreter or person to sign to assist you in communicating effectively with staff during your stay. Please let us know.

For a large print version of this leaflet, contact PALS 01493 453240