

IgA Nephropathy (IgAN)

Overview

IgA Nephropathy (IgAN) is an autoimmune disease that affects the filters (glomeruli) of the kidneys. IgA is an immunoglobulin that is part of an individual's healthy immune system. The IgA immunoglobulin normally attaches itself to an infection found in the body, triggering an immune response, and works to eliminate the infection. When an individual has IgA Nephropathy, a defective form of IgA attaches itself to another IgA molecule instead of an infection, causing an immune complex. These then become stuck in the kidneys' glomeruli, which damages the kidneys' filters, causing blood and proteins to leak out of the kidneys and into the urine.

Symptoms

- Dark, cola-colored urine
- Protein in the urine, which can be foamy (called proteinuria)
- Low blood protein level shown in a blood test
- Swelling in face, eyes, and lower extremities
- Weight gain due to extra fluid building up in your body
- Can cause high blood pressure (called hypertension) and high fat levels in the blood (high cholesterol)



Fast Facts

- IgAN is the most common form of primary glomerulonephritis that affects about 200,000-350,000 people per year in the world.
- It can be diagnosed in both children and adults, but is most commonly diagnosed in young and middle-aged adults.
- Scientists have not found the cause of the defective IgA immunoglobulin in patients who suffer from IgAN.
- The only way to diagnose IgAN is a kidney biopsy to look at the kidney's filtering units under a microscope. The buildup of IgA deposits causes inflammation and damages the filtering units of the kidneys.
- On average, 20% of patients will progress to end-stage kidney disease.
- It is common for IgAN to return after a kidney transplant.
- Asians and Caucasians are most likely to be diagnosed with IgAN.
- IgAN is twice as common in males than in females.

■ Treating Your Disease



Short-Term Goals

The short-term goal of treatment is to stop or lower the amount of protein and blood spilling into the urine and reduce symptoms.



Long-Term Goals

The long-term goals of treatment include preventing relapses of protein and blood in the urine and preventing the deterioration of kidney function.

There are currently two FDA-approved treatment options for IgA Nephropathy. Contact your doctor to ask about the best treatment option for you.

How to Live With Your Disease

1.

Following a low fat, low sodium diet will help improve your kidneys' function and your IgAN symptoms.

3.

Learn about your disease, treatment options, and clinical trials in order to better advocate for yourself.

2.

Finding a nephrologist that specializes in IgAN that you trust is very important to your long-term health.

4.

NephCure Kidney International can help you connect with other patients and find support to manage your disease.

Please visit NephCure.org to learn more about IgA Nephropathy.

NephCure