

Henoch-Schönlein Purpura (HSP)

Information for parents and/or caregivers

Welcome to the Southern Adelaide Local Health Network. This information sheet aims to answer any questions you may have about your child having HSP.

What is Henoch-schonlein purpura?

HSP is a vasculitis. Purpura are purple bruises which result from leaking of blood vessels which have become inflamed.

Small blood vessels in the skin leak causing the rash. (see picture below). The rash looks like raised bruises. HSP can also affect blood vessels in the intestines and the kidneys.



The cause of HSP is unknown. It occurs most often during winter and spring, usually after an upper respiratory tract infection such as a cold.

HSP usually affects children from 3 to 15 years of age, but it can happen at any age. HSP is not contagious.

Signs and symptoms

- **Skin rash:** The rash looks like small bruises or small reddish-purple spots. (see picture above) It's usually seen on the buttocks, on the legs and around the elbows.
- **Swelling:** Many children with HSP also have swelling over the backs of the feet and hands and the scrotum in boys.
- **Pain in the joints.**
- **Stomach pain.**
- **Blood in the stool (poo) or urine:** Caused by the blood vessels in the bowel and the kidneys becoming inflamed. Serious kidney problems don't happen very often, but they can occur.

- In rare cases, an abnormal folding of the bowel called **intussusception** can occur. This causes a blockage in the intestines that may need surgery. If abdominal pain and vomiting occur during HSP, it is very important to seek medical attention on the same day.

Treatment

There is no specific treatment for HSP. Medicines can help your child feel better.

Fortunately, HSP usually gets better without any treatment. Painkillers (e.g. paracetamol) or anti-inflammatory medicines (e.g. ibuprofen) can help relieve the joint pain. Your doctor may recommend a drug called prednisolone to help relieve inflammation. This can help people with severe abdominal pains or very painful joints.

HSP usually gets better on its own without causing lasting problems. About half of people who have had HSP will get it again. A few people will have kidney damage because of HSP. There may be a delay of weeks or months before it appears. Your child's doctor will want to test urine samples and blood pressure several times after the HSP goes away to check for kidney problems. These checks should go on for at least six months but your child may need even longer.

Key points to remember

- HSP causes inflammation of the small blood vessels in the skin causing a rash.
- HSP can also affect blood vessels around the kidneys and intestines.
- HSP occurs most often in children from 3 to 15 years old.
- The cause of HSP is unknown.
- Paracetamol and anti-inflammatory drugs help painful joints and general discomfort.
- Prednisolone may be prescribed.

- Return to your doctor if there is increasing pain, swelling, blood in the stools (poo) or urine or if you are worried at all.
- Long term follow-up involving urine tests and blood pressure checks are very important.

When to come back

Return to your doctor or the hospital if your child has increasing stomach pains or swelling, blood in the stools or urine, or if you are worried for any other reason.

If abdominal pain and vomiting occur during HSP, it is very important to seek medical attention urgently.

For more information

- See your family doctor
- For 24 hour health advice call – health direct Australia 1800 022 222
- Parent helpline 1300 364 100
- Local emergency department

Adapted from

Patient education: Henoch-schonlein purpura(IGA vasculitis) December2015

The Royal Children's hospital Melbourne: Henoch-schonlein purpura: kids fact sheet

The Sydney children's network: Henoch-schonlein purpura: factsheet

The princess maragret hospital: WA, Henoch-schonlein purpura: factsheet

Test next due	Blood pressure	Urine dipstick	Name of doctor

For more information

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This document has been reviewed and endorsed by consumers.