Nephrotic Syndrome
Protein leak in urine
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kidneys leak proteins in urine

Your child has developed swelling over eyes, face and limbs. The doctor confirmed that your child has had a disease of the kidney called Nephrotic Syndrome...

Q. What is Nephrotic Syndrome?
A. This is a common kidney disease seen in children where in the capillary walls in the kidney become leaky and allows heavy loss of proteins in urine. This causes low levels of protein in blood and therefore swelling of the body.

Nephrotic syndrome is not infectious and is not related to diet or socioeconomic status of the child.

Q. What causes leak of proteins in urine?
A. The leak of protein is due to some disturbance in the immune system of the body.

Q. Is the disease treatable?
A. Of course, with medications only. The drug used to treat nephrotic syndrome is a steroid that needs to be taken for 3-4 months in the doses specified by the doctor.

Q. Steroids? Aren't they harmful?
A. Every drug has certain side effects and it is the doctor's responsibility to monitor them. Steroids is the only drug that can reduce the puffiness and stop the urinary leak of proteins effectively and the side effects like increase in appetite, weight gain are temporary. Many other problems like short stature, cataracts and hypertension are seen only when steroids are used for a very long duration.

Q. Does the disease cease with steroids?
A. Most children with nephrotic syndrome respond well to steroid treatment. The protein disappears in the urine and then the swelling reduces within a week or two. This is called remission. Some children take longer than others to go into remission. The term remission is used rather than cure because protein can return in urine and swelling can reappear. This is a relapse. The number of relapses can vary from child to child. If the relapses are not too frequent they can be treated with steroids again. As the child grows the relapses decrease in frequency.

Q. How does one recognize the recurrence of the problem?
A. Children in relapse have early morning swelling around eyes which progresses on to involve the abdomen and limbs. Sometimes cough and cold can trigger a relapse. They can have a significant reduction in urine output.

Q. Are both kidneys affected and do kidneys get damaged?
A. Both kidneys are affected and leak proteins. Kidneys are not damaged inspite of several relapses as long as they respond to steroids.

Q. Can my child lead a normal life?
A. Yes. They should be encouraged to continue with normal physical and mental activities. There is no need to restrict them from attending school.
PARENTS PLEASE NOTE:

Diet: A child with nephrotic syndrome should have a diet with normal protein intake and calories. It would be preferable to restrict oily food and high calorie food till the child completes the treatment course.

Consult your doctor if your child needs a special diet chart

Your child should have: No restriction on sweets, fruits, snacks and meat | No extra proteins or restricted proteins | No additional salt or fat | Normal fluids

Vaccines: As steroids affect the child’s immune system, he or she should not be given any “live vaccines” like oral polio drops, measles, MMR, varicella and BCG vaccines. Regarding other vaccines parents need to consult their doctor. Your child may require special vaccines in order to prevent serious infections for which your doctor can be consulted.

Infections: Your child may be at risk of infections while they are on steroids or even otherwise when they have swelling. If your child has fever or stomach ache or appears unwell PLEASE CONTACT YOUR DOCTOR IMMEDIATELY.