

# Nephrotic Syndrome

*what you should know*

## WHAT IS NEPHROTIC SYNDROME?



- Tiny filtering units (glomeruli) in the kidney are damaged or not working.
- Protein normally kept in your body, leaks into the urine.



### Signs and symptoms include:

- High urine protein (proteinuria)
- Swelling (edema) around the eyes, face, feet, ankles, and/or belly
- Weight gain (from fluid retention)
- Foamy urine
- Poor appetite
- High blood cholesterol



### Many diseases can cause it:

- Minimal change disease (MCD)
- Membranous glomerulonephritis
- Focal segmental glomerulosclerosis (FSGS)
- IGA nephropathy
- Lupus
- Diabetes
- Certain infections such as Hepatitis B and C, HIV, others

## HOW IS IT TESTED?



- **Physical exam:**  
Visible signs and symptoms
- **Blood and urine tests:**  
Signs of kidney damage and other diseases
- **Imaging tests and/or kidney biopsy:**  
Signs of kidney disease
- **Genetic tests:**  
Inherited diseases that are linked with kidney disease

## HOW IS IT TREATED?



- Depending on the disease and person's overall health, dietary changes and medicines are used to:
  - Lower excess salt and fluids in the body
  - Lower loss of protein in the urine
  - Lower cholesterol in the blood
- Certain medicines that suppress or "calm" the immune system can be used.
- Sometimes, the dose might need to be changed, or a different medicine might be used.
- In some cases, nephrotic syndrome can lead to kidney failure, which is treated with dialysis or a kidney transplant.

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## HOW CAN I REDUCE MY RISK?



### Diet, Exercise, and Lifestyle Changes

- Follow a healthy diet that is low in salt and cholesterol.
- You might need a lower-protein diet.
- You might also need to lower your fluid and water intake.
- Weigh yourself regularly to check for water weight gain.
- You can meet with a registered dietitian to discuss any changes needed in your diet.
- Do not smoke; exercise often; avoid alcohol.



### Medicines

- Before taking any over-the-counter medicine or supplement, ask your healthcare provider which is safe.
- Take all medicines as instructed by your healthcare provider.



### Other Steps

- If you need an imaging test, ask about measuring your kidney function first before any dye is used.
- Discuss birth control and pregnancy with your healthcare provider.
- Talk with your healthcare provider about which treatments are right for you.
- Do not miss any medical appointments.
- Talk to your healthcare provider and ask questions. You can also contact the National Kidney Foundation at [1.855.NKF.CARES](tel:1855.NKF.CARES) (1.855.653.2273) or [nkfcares@kidney.org](mailto:nkfcares@kidney.org)



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