NATIONAL KIDNEY FOUNDATION®

Discussing IgA Nephropathy Treatments: A Guide for Healthcare Professionals

EDUCATE YOUR PATIENTS

Be Reassuring and Realistic about Treatment Options

- Mention that IgA nephropathy (IgaN) as a chronic condition that requires monitoring and management.
- Reassure the person that modern therapies can help slow progression and help protect the kidneys.
- Mention that treatment is not just about today's symptoms, but it's about lowering the risk of kidney function decline over years.
- Emphasize goals such as reducing protein in the urine (proteinuria), controlling blood pressure, slowing kidney function decline (eGFR), reducing heart disease risk, and maintaining quality of life.
- Acknowledge that IgAN behaves differently from person to person, so lab trends are followed up over time over time and adjustments to treatments may be as needed.
- Remind them that they are not alone in this. The healthcare team is available to help answer questions and provide advice.

Use Shared Decision-Making

- **Confirm** risk and mention that labs and biopsy results will help estimate risk and decide how intensive treatment should be.
- **Compare** options clearly and discuss possible benefits, common side effects, monitoring needs, medication burden, cost/access, and what happens if treatment is delayed.
- **Discuss** preferences and ask which tradeoffs feel acceptable to them, and which would be difficult.
- **Check** a person's understanding and ask if they can tell in their own words what the plan is and what to watch for.



Discuss treatment topics or terms that may need more clarity

- Discuss nutritional and lifestyle changes, including healthy eating patterns, sodium reduction when needed, regular activity, weight management, and avoiding tobacco.
- Discuss possible medicines that can be used to help treat IgAN and its symptoms.
  - **ACE inhibitors and ARBs** are medicines that lower blood pressure. Lower blood pressure can help protect your heart and kidneys. These medicines can also lower pressure in the kidney filters. This may help lower the amount of protein that leaks into your urine.
  - Some people with IgAN may take medicines that calm the immune system. These medicines are called **systemic steroids.** Systemic steroids can lower inflammation in the body and kidneys. They can cause side effects, so your healthcare team will watch you closely.
- Mention that there has been a lot of progress in treating IgAN the past few years, with newer medicines becoming available. These medicines work in different ways. They may help lower protein in your urine. In some cases, they may help keep your kidney function stable. Examples of newer medicines include:
  - A type of **targeted-release steroid** sends medicine through your gut to the area where much of the IgA is made. This may lower the chance of side effects compared with systemic steroids.
  - **ERAs** help blood vessels in your kidneys relax. This may help lower inflammation and scarring.
  - **Complement inhibitors** calm part of the immune system called the complement system. This may help lower inflammation and kidney damage.
  - **B cell inhibitors** target B cells. B cells are white blood cells that make antibodies. These medicines may help your body make less IgA. They are also called **APRIL blockers or APRIL-BAFF blockers.**

Mention the availability of **clinical trials** and how research studies may offer access to emerging options and help advance care for IgAN.

Keep it conversational

- Ask about their biggest concerns, whether it's protecting kidney function, side effects, cost, daily routine, pregnancy planning, or something else.
- Let them know it is normal to have questions, especially when there is so much information to sort through.
- Make a clear recommendations based on the person's kidney condition and overall health.
- Talk with the person or their care partner about steps they can take to manage their health. Also discuss how to keep track of lab tests, including whether online records are available.



Discuss next steps

- State what will be monitored and when.
- Reaffirm that treatments will be chosen together, based on kidney function, protein levels in the urine, blood pressure, biopsy findings, other health conditions, and the person's preferences.
- Discuss kidney care and disease treatment options with discussions and input by the clinician, person with IgAN, and care partner. Mention that the decisions are also based on the person's clinical profile, current medical guidance, and clinical expertise.
- Review medicines, adherence, over-the-counter products, diet or sodium guidance, smoking, activity, pregnancy plans when relevant, and when to contact the care team.
- Provide a written follow-up plan and reliable educational resources.
- Summarize the agreed treatment plan and the reason for each medication or lifestyle step.
- Schedule follow-up and outline what would trigger treatment adjustment.

For more information, contact the National Kidney Foundation

Toll-free help line: 855.NKF.CARES or email: nkfcares@kidney.org

NATIONAL KIDNEY FOUNDATION®

KIDNEY.ORG

Information contained in this NKF educational resource is based on data available at the time of publication. It is intended to help clinicians stay informed about new scientific findings and developments. This resource is not intended to establish a preferred standard of care and should not be interpreted as prescribing an exclusive course of management.

© 2026 National Kidney Foundation, Inc. 742-0490_2607