Nephrotic Syndrome

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.
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 (1.855.653.2273) or nkfcares@kidney.org