

# Lupus and Kidney Disease

Pravir Baxi, MD

Department of Internal Medicine, Section of  
Nephrology

Rush University Medical Center

# Kidney Involvement in Lupus

- Lupus is an autoimmune disease in which the body's immune system attacks the body's organs
- The kidneys can be involved in almost 40% of patients who have lupus
  - The kidneys are commonly one of the major organs involved
- Lupus Nephritis

# Role of the Kidneys

- Important in filtering blood to help remove wastes and toxins
- Important in keeping our electrolytes in balance
- Involved in controlling blood pressure
- Involved in bone health

# Kidney Disease

- Two most common causes of kidney disease are:
  - Diabetes
  - Hypertension
- There are many other conditions including Lupus that can cause kidney disease
  - Inherited disease
  - Blockage
  - Medications

# Symptoms of Kidney Disease

- Most patients with early kidney disease may not have symptoms
- In later stages, some symptoms may arise including:
  - Loss of appetite; nausea, vomiting
  - Feeling tired or short of breath
  - Having trouble thinking clearly
  - Swollen feet and/or ankles
  - Weird or metallic taste

# Lupus and Kidney Disease

- Your Lupus doctor will test your blood regularly to check your kidney function and electrolytes
- Urine tests will be done regularly
  - Blood often not visible to the naked eye
  - Protein
- A kidney biopsy is sometimes needed to diagnose and help manage your treatment

# Lupus and Kidney Disease

- Kidney disease due to Lupus can range from mild disease requiring no specific treatment to severe disease requiring targeted treatment
- Most patients do very well with treatment
- You may need to take medication for years to keep the kidney disease in check

# Lupus and Kidney Disease

- If you have kidney disease, there are other steps we can take to help protect our kidneys
- Smoking can accelerate kidney damage
- Controlling your blood pressure
- If you have diabetes, controlling your blood sugar
- Avoid medications even if they are over the counter unless recommended by your healthcare team



# Lupus and Kidney Disease

- In the most severe cases, patients may develop worsening kidney disease
- If your kidneys fail, there are options at that time which include dialysis and possibly a kidney transplant
- Lupus patients do well with both of these as do patients who have other types of kidney disease

# Lupus and Kidney Disease Prevention

- Make sure to follow up with your primary care and lupus doctor regularly
- If there is any evidence of kidney involvement, you will be referred to a kidney doctor

# Questions