Lupus and Kidney Disease

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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. This condition is known as Lupus Nephritis.

- The kidneys are commonly one of the major organs involved.
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.
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.
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