

Lupus Update with Dr. Robert Katz

Lupus In Children

Lupus in children has the roughly the same manifestations as lupus in adults, but it may not be diagnosed early. Treatment side effects are a major issue.

Children with lupus may be put on steroids, which can change their appearance and their mood. Lupus steroids can cause growth suppression in children with chronic use. Steroids can cause glucose intolerance, making the blood sugar go up and other side effects. On the other hand, other options for treatment of lupus can also be complicated. Immunosuppressive drugs need to be used cautiously in lupus. Some cytotoxic drugs are helpful to induce remission for problems such as kidney lupus, but have quite a few side effects including inducing infertility. Some of the other immunosuppressive drugs such as Cellcept (mycophenolate mofetil) may be a better choice. Other immunosuppressives such as azathioprine and methotrexate can also be used.

The American College of Rheumatology has set up criteria for the diagnosis of lupus. The diagnosis should be made by experienced clinicians, usually rheumatologists, and treatment needs to be tailored to whether or not there is major organ involvement and possible side effects from medication.