

Lupus and the Kidneys

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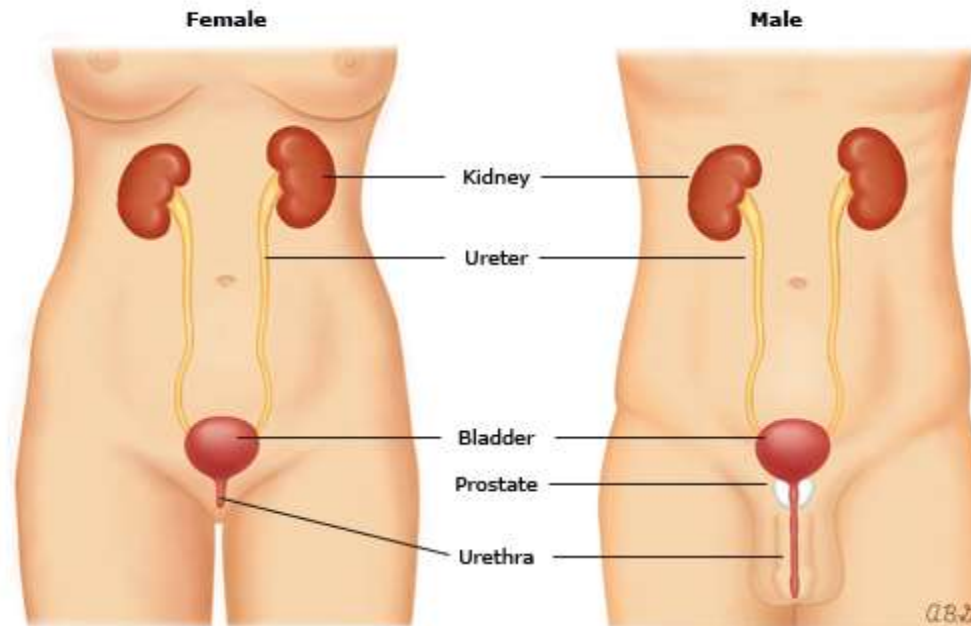


Kidney disease in a patient with lupus

- To understand this lets talk about
 - Normal functions of kidneys
 - Why do Lupus patients develop kidney disease?
 - How can Kidneys be damaged in a Lupus patient
 - By Lupus itself (Lupus Nephritis)
 - Side Effects of medications used
 - Other diseases that may be affecting a Lupus patient (eg Diabetes and Hypertension)
 - How can kidney disease be diagnosed in lupus
 - When should you get concerned (symptoms)
 - What should your primary care doctor or rheumatologist look for (Diagnosis and referral)
 - What can a kidney specialist do for you (Diagnosis and treatment)
 - How can YOU (the patient) help the team of doctors in treating you more effectively and improve your prognosis
 - Treatment of Lupus Nephritis

Role of kidneys in maintaining health

- Function of the kidneys
 - Eliminate extra water - Clean blood of toxins and waste
 - Maintains a balance in blood essential for healthy functioning
 - Acts as a filter so only “ bad stuff” is eliminated and “ good stuff” stays in blood



Kidney involvement in Lupus Patients

- **Lupus Nephritis**
 - Autoantibodies (antibodies made by the body's immune system against its own organs) play a role in this disease.
 - Some of the antibodies go to the kidneys and start a reaction that affects the ability of the kidneys to function
 - Kidneys start leaking protein in this situation that causes the patient to gain weight, have swelling, and then start losing kidney function
 - Your doctor may tell you your BP is getting higher too
- **Side Effects of Medications, Drugs or Dye used for Medical Tests**
 - Pain medication of the class of NSAIDS (like Ibuprofen, Naprosyn, Toradol, Aspirin, BC powder, Meloxicam etc)
 - Some herbs and supplements can cause kidney damage and high BP too (eg Aristolochic Acid)
 - Imaging test with Contrast Dye (CT scans , MRI etc) can also cause kidney damage in some.
 - Recreational / Illicit Drug use (Heroin, cocaine, Amphetamines etc)
- **Other diseases affecting a Lupus Patient**
 - Other diseases like Diabetes , High BP, Stones etc which are unrelated to Lupus may co-exist and cause kidney disease

Kidney involvement in Lupus Patients

- Lupus Nephritis can cause
 - Acute Kidney Failure
 - needs close follow up and treatment to improve function
 - Chronic Kidney Disease
 - Needs close follow and treatment to slow down loss
 - End Stage Renal Disease
 - Dialysis
 - Kidney Transplant

When should you get concerned about your kidneys?

- Frothy or bubbly urine
- Bloody/ dark brown urine
- Puffiness around the eyes
- Leg swelling
- weight gain (not related to steroid use)
- Decrease in urine amount
- Increase in BP
- Protein or blood in urine at doctor's office

Tests that can confirm kidney disease

- Some tests that are routinely done by Rheumatologists for Lupus patients to detect kidney disease
 - **Urine dipstick**
 - This can show protein or blood in the urine
 - **Blood test**
 - Your doctor will be monitoring kidney function by a test called **“CREATININE”**
 - If there is abnormal test in urine and blood, the doctor also will be checking some special tests like **“ ANTI-dsDNA ANTIBODY AND COMPLEMENT LEVELS**
- If there is a suspicion for kidney disease you will be referred to a kidney specialist and they may perform a **“Kidney Biopsy”**

Treatment of Lupus Nephritis (Kidney disease caused by Lupus)

- Lupus Nephritis is a common term for several different ways Lupus can affect the kidneys
- Your doctor will tell you the “class” of the disease
- Class 3, 4 and 5 require more intensive treatment and monitoring
- Treatment includes
 - Prednisone
 - BP medications like Lisinopril and Losartan that help in slowing down leakage of protein from the kidneys
 - Medications that attempt to “lower” immunity and stop formation of antibodies and their effects
 - Like Cytoxan, Mycophenolate (cellcept and Myfortic), Rituximab etc

How can YOU (the patient) help YOUR team of doctors

- Regular Follow up with doctors is cornerstone of treatment
- Take the medications as prescribed
- Healthy Living Habits are essential. Do not take anything bad for your kidneys
 - Pain medications like NSAIDS should be taken only in limited dosage with close monitoring by doctors and stopped at the earliest sign of kidney disease
 - Do not take any over the counter medications including herbal medications without discussing with your doctor
 - Avoid using illicit drugs
- Once started on treatment, be compliant with medications.
 - Discuss side effects and alternative treatment options with doctors rather than stopping medications yourself in case you are having side effects
 - Continue to follow closely with doctors even after completing course of planned treatment as disease can come back/ relapse.

TO KEEP KIDNEYS HEALTHY IN LUPUS PATIENTS,
THE KEY WORD IS TEAMWORK BETWEEN THE
PATIENT, RHEUMATOLOGIST AND
NEPHROLOGIST

