



A guide to...

Henoch-Schonlein Purpura (HSP) *Patient Information*

Children's Emergency Department (CED)

Watford General Hospital



Caring for your child with HSP

Your child has been diagnosed with HSP.

We are happy that your child is well enough to be taken home under your supervision.

What is it?

HSP is a condition that causes blood vessels throughout the body to become inflamed ('vasculitis') and can cause minor bleeding into the skin (resulting in a rash), and occasionally problems affecting the kidneys and bowel.

No one knows what causes it but it is thought to be the result of a previous infection and often occurs after a viral upper respiratory tract infection. HSP can affect people of any age, but the majority of cases occur in children under 10 years old. It seems to affect more boys than girls and is more common during the winter months, possibly because of the increase in viral illnesses.

How is it diagnosed?

The diagnosis is based on symptoms, medical history and examination. However, blood tests, urine tests and blood pressure monitoring will also be required to rule out other problems and to check kidney function.

Normal Symptoms

- Skin rash—this looks like small bruises or red/purple spots, usually on the lower body, the bottom and legs; sometimes they can be found around the elbows, the face and upper body.
- Joint pain—usually knees and ankles; these can become swollen, painful and warm to touch.
- Abdominal pain—this can develop suddenly, before the rash even appears.
- There may be fever and tiredness.

Less common symptoms

- Blood in urine or poo
- Vomiting and diarrhoea.

Monitoring

Due to the risk of kidney problems, your child will need to have their urine and blood pressure monitored regularly during the next weeks / months. You will be provided with some urine testing strips to test their urine:

- Daily for two weeks
- Then alternate days for two weeks
- Then weekly for one month
- Then, fortnightly for one month
- And finally, monthly for three months.

A referral will be made to our community nursing team who will visit to monitor blood pressure:

- Twice a week for two weeks
- Then, weekly for two weeks
- Then, fortnightly for one month
- And stop thereafter if all normal

When to seek medical advice

You will need to contact the community nursing team if:

- Visible blood in urine
- 3+ protein in urine on three consecutive days
- Blood in poo or vomit
- Severe tummy pain
- Very swollen and/or painful joints
- In boys, swollen or painful testicles.

Care of your child

Most children can be managed at home under the supervision of their parent / carer.

- Encourage good fluid intake
- Elevate limbs with swollen joints
- Analgesia for any joint and/or abdominal pain
- Steroid medication may be prescribed in some instances — if prescribed then ensure the course is given as directed.
- Liaise with community nursing team as required.

HSP usually gets better on its own in about four to six weeks.

If you need this leaflet in another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01923 217 187** or email **westherts.pals@nhs.uk**



Author	Sian Edwards
Department	Children's Emergency Department
Ratified / Review Date	January 2025 / January 2028
ID Number	40-2372-V2

