

What is Glomerulonephritis?

About 10% of adults with glomerulonephritis develop chronic kidney disease.

1 Introduction

Glomerulonephritis is a type of kidney disease caused by damage to the glomeruli, tiny filters in the kidneys. The glomeruli can become inflamed and scarred, which results in the kidneys slowly losing their ability to remove waste and excess blood from the urine. There are two types of Glomerulonephritis, acute and chronic. Acute glomerulonephritis can come on suddenly, often a result of a viral infection, while chronic glomerulonephritis develops without symptoms over several years and can lead to kidney failure.

2 Causes

Glomerulonephritis may be caused by a variety of factors and vary depending on the type of glomerulonephritis, including:

- Genetics
- Toxins and medicines
- Viral infections such as strep throat, HIV, hepatitis B and C
- Lupus-related kidney infection
- Vasculitis

3 Symptoms

Patients can experience different symptoms depending on the form and cause of glomerulonephritis. In many cases, the kidneys can be badly damaged before any symptoms appear. Some of the most common symptoms are:

- Blood in the urine
- High blood pressure
- Foamy urine
- Swelling in the legs or face
- Fatigue, nausea or rash

4 Treatments

Treatment options for this disease depend on the cause and level of severity. While some cases of glomerulonephritis may go away on its own, most treatments focus on slowing the progression of the disease and preventing complications. Some treatment options are:

- Blood pressure medication
- Corticosteroids to reduce inflammation
- Water pills
- Diet changes to include less protein, sodium and potassium
- Dialysis
- Kidney transplant

Did you know?

80-90% of people with rapidly progressive glomerulonephritis become dependent on dialysis.

For more information on Glomerulonephritis and supportive resources, please visit www.kidney.org

References:

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