



What is IgA Nephropathy?

IgA nephropathy most often affects males in their teens to late 30s.

1. Introduction

IgA nephropathy, also called Berger disease, is a kidney disease caused by a buildup of immunoglobulin A in the kidneys. Over time, this buildup causes inflammation and damage to the glomeruli, lowering the kidneys' ability to filter waste and fluid from the blood. IgA nephropathy often slowly becomes worse over a period of years, but the course of the disease will vary from person to person. Serious kidney damage from IgA nephropathy can lead to other conditions like chronic kidney disease or kidney failure. This is also one of the most common causes of kidney disease, behind high blood pressure and diabetes.

2. Causes

The exact cause of this disease is unknown, but it is currently thought to be the result of the body making too much of an unusual type of antibody, IgA, that is more likely to clump together and deposit in the kidney, causing inflammation over time. Though IgA nephropathy can be passed down through the family, most cases occur in people with no family history of the disease.

3. Symptoms

IgA nephropathy often doesn't cause symptoms early on, with some people not noticing any health effects for 10 years or more. Some symptoms can include:

- + Bloody urine that starts during or soon after a respiratory infection
- + Repeated episodes of dark or foamy urine
- + Swelling of the hands and feet or around the eyes
- + High blood pressure
- + Pain on one or both sides of the back below the ribs
- + Weakness and tiredness

4. Treatments

There is no cure for IgA nephropathy. The goal of treatment is to slow the damage to the kidneys and delay or prevent kidney failure. Some treatment options are:

- + Medications to lower inflammation, control blood pressure or remove extra fluid from the body
- + Restrict salt and fluid intake to control swelling

In many cases, the disease does not get worse over time, but if it progresses to kidney failure, a kidney transplant or dialysis may be necessary.

Did you know?

About 1 in 10 kidney biopsies in the United States show IgA nephropathy.

For more information on IgA nephropathy and supportive resources, please visit [kidneyfund.org](https://www.kidneyfund.org).

References:

<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/kidney-disease/iga-nephropathy>

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