

# FACTSHEET

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## Henoch-Schoenlein Purpura (HSP)

### What is it?

Henoch-Schoenlein Purpura is a type of inflammation of small blood vessels (known as vasculitis). Henoch-Schoenlein Purpura, is also known as HSP or SHP and is named after two 19th century German doctors who first described it. HSP inflammation can occur in different parts of the body, causing various symptoms.

### Symptoms

HSP mainly affects the skin, causing a purple bruise-like or spotty rash (usually around the ankles, lower legs and buttocks). It can in boys cause swelling of the scrotum and can affect the joints, causing swelling and discomfort. HSP may also affect the kidneys and the bowel sometimes causing tummy pain. It can cause swelling under the skin. Usually the only way to check if HSP has affected the kidneys is to have a urine test done by a doctor but urine may become dark or red because it contains blood.

### Who gets it?

It occurs mainly in young school age children, but is also seen in toddlers and occasionally adults. It affects up to fourteen out of every 100,000 schoolchildren each year.

### Treatment

HSP usually settles by itself. Sometimes pain relievers such as paracetamol (eg Dymadon, Panadol, Panamax) may be required for joint discomfort. Simple urine tests and blood pressure measurements are needed on more than one occasion in all children to see if the kidneys have been affected. Mild inflammation of the kidneys is

common. Other tests such as X-rays or scans may be needed for some children.

Rarely children with HSP develop severe bowel and/or kidney problems for which they will need to be checked by a specialist, and may need other specific treatment. In most children symptoms will settle in a few weeks. In up to 50% of children symptoms may return from weeks to months later. If symptoms do return see your doctor for a check up and treatment plan. All children need a clear plan of follow up. Ask your doctor about your child's follow-up plan.

### What causes it?

The exact cause is not known; the disease may sometimes be sparked off by an infection. It cannot be passed on to other people.

#### Remember:

- HSP usually settles by itself and most children just need pain - relief and cuddles!
- All children need to be seen and followed up by their doctor.
- After subsiding the symptoms may reappear; contact your doctor if this happens.