Doctor Discussion Guide:

Managing IgA Nephropathy

Knowing how to talk to your doctor and care team will help you feel prepared and empowered during your visits.

Tracking Your Symptoms

Taking detailed records of how you feel each day, as well as the steps you've taken to manage them, can help your doctor as you work together to develop a treatment plan.

In addition to physical symptoms, IgA nephropathy can often take a toll on your daily activities and mental health. It is important to inform your doctor of any major changes to your diet, exercise or personal life as those details could play a role in determining the best treatment option for you.

Understanding Your Doctor

Whether your doctor visits are in person or via telehealth, there are certain terms that will come up that can be challenging to remember or understand. With that in mind, listed below are some key terms associated with IgA nephropathy:

Biopsy

When a sample of cells or tissue is removed from the body to be examined by a pathologist. If IgA nephropathy is suspected, a kidney biopsy is needed to determine a diagnosis.

Estimated glomerular filtration rate (eGFR)

This is a blood test that is used to measure how well the kidneys are functioning and filtering blood.

Ileum

Ileum is the last part of the small intestine. It connects to the first part of the large intestine, called the cecum. The ileum helps to further digest food coming from the stomach and other parts of the small intestine. It is also the location of Peyer's patches.

Peyer's patches

Peyer's patches are areas of lymphoid tissue, like tonsils, lymph nodes, or the spleen, which play a large role in the immune system. They monitor for things that do not belong in the intestines and help destroy them if needed. Peyer's patches are a main site of the immune cells that make the antibodies thought to contribute to IgA nephropathy.

Proteinuria

Increased levels of protein in the urine; this can happen when the kidneys are inflamed or damaged. Measuring proteinuria levels in patients with IgA nephropathy is a way to see if the kidneys show signs of potential damage. Typically, proteinuria is measured through a urinalysis.

Renin-angiotensin system

The renin-angiotensin system (RAS) is used by the body to help control blood pressure. The body monitors for things like changes in blood pressure to the kidneys and salt content in blood. Depending on these factors, the body can increase blood pressure.

Urine protein-to-creatine ratio (UPCR)

This is one of the measurements being evaluated through urinalysis, it is used to measure protein in the urine and can be used to monitor kidney function and detect kidney damage.

Urinalysis

This is a test of the urine. It can check for many things including color, odor, pH, blood, protein, glucose, bacteria, cells, and other substances If you are living with IgA nephropathy your doctor will conduct this test on an ongoing basis in order to determine the best treatment plan for you.

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Talking to Your Doctor

Two-way communication with your doctor is important. Becoming an active participant and asking questions is a great way to start a discussion about the best options for your care. Here are some questions that may help you start that conversation:

Learning About Your Diagnosis

- "What are some things I should know about my IgA nephropathy diagnosis?"
- "Are there any other symptoms I should expect?"
- "What does this diagnosis mean for me in the future?"
- "How often will I need to see a doctor and monitor my progress?"
- "How often will I need to come in?"
- "Will I need to get any testing done?"

Establishing a Treatment Plan

- "Are there any approved treatments for IgA nephropathy?"
- "What treatment would be right for me and how are you determining that recommendation?"
- "How does this treatment differ from others I may have taken before?"
- "How do I take my prescribed medication?"
- "How do I know if my medication is working?"
- "What are the goals of this treatment?"

Continuing to Manage IgA Nephropathy

- "How do my test results compare to my results from my last exam?"
- "When will I know if I should change medications?"
- "Will changing medications have severe side effects I should expect?"
- "How long will I have to wait if I want to change to another medicine?"
- "How long do I have to take this treatment?"

Discover additional resources available at IgANConnect.com. New updates and tools are continuously being added.

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