Membranous Nephropathy

What is Membranous Nephropathy?

Membranous nephropathy is a kidney disease that is caused by a build up of proteins in the part of the kidney filter called the glomerular basement membrane. This part of the glomerulus is the thin tissue that helps separate the blood from the urine. In membranous nephropathy, the basement membrane becomes thick and damaged, allowing large amounts of protein to leak out of the blood and into the urine.

Who gets Membranous Nephropathy?

Anyone can have membranous nephropathy, but it is more common in adults over the age of 40.

What are some of the symptoms of Membranous Nephropathy?

Symptoms occur slowly and can include swelling, weight gain, and high blood pressure.

What causes Membranous Nephropathy?

The cause is not known but researchers are actively trying to learn more.

What is the treatment for Membranous Nephropathy?

For people with large amounts of protein in the urine, medications to suppress the immune system are often used. These include corticosteroids, cyclosporine, tacrolimus, and cyclophosphamide. Limiting salt in the diet and using medications to help the body get rid of extra salt and water are often helpful. Blood pressure medications that can decrease protein in the urine are also used. Sometimes medicines are prescribed to decrease the chance of blood clots, which can be a problem in patients with nephrotic syndrome and membranous nephropathy. The NEPTUNE study aims to understand membranous nephropathy to develop better treatments.

How Membranous Nephropathy diagnosed?

With results from blood tests, urine tests and, most importantly, a kidney biopsy, a doctor can determine if a person has membranous nephropathy.