What is Nephrotic Syndrome?
The four key components of nephrotic syndrome include swelling, significant protein in the urine, low blood protein level (albumin) and elevated cholesterol. Elevated cholesterol related to nephrotic syndrome is not a long-term concern.

Nephrotic syndrome may occur when the filtering units of the kidney are damaged. This damage allows protein normally kept in the plasma to leak into the urine in large amounts, which lowers the amount of protein in the blood. Since the protein in the blood helps keep fluid in the bloodstream, some of this fluid leaks out of the bloodstream into the tissues, causing swelling (edema). The swelling may be most noticeable in the legs after standing and in the tissue under the eyes when waking up first thing in the morning.

How is Nephrotic Syndrome diagnosed?
The pediatric nephrologist (kidney doctor) can detect protein in a urine sample. The doctor may also look at blood work to check protein and fat levels in the blood. Sometimes diagnosis requires a kidney biopsy.

What causes Nephrotic Syndrome?
Nephrotic syndrome is not a specific kidney disease. It can occur in any kidney disease that damages the filtering units in a certain way that allows them to leak protein into urine. Some of the diseases that cause nephrotic syndrome affect only the kidney. Diseases that cause nephrotic syndrome, such as diabetes and lupus, also affect other parts of the body.

What are the complications of Nephrotic Syndrome?
The most serious complications are overwhelming infection and clotting.

How is Nephrotic Syndrome treated/managed?
Nephrotic syndrome is treated with medication (usually steroids) prescribed by the doctor. Most children respond to this medication when taken as directed. Illnesses such as a cold can cause the condition to return so it is important to notify the doctor upon illness. A small number of children cannot be treated with medication and will experience kidney failure. The doctor will discuss other treatment options if this is the case.

What are the day to day recommendations?
- Give medications as prescribed by the doctor. It is important to not skip doses or change dosages (unless instructed by the doctor), as this may increase the risk of relapse.
- Avoid Motrin, Ibuprofen, and Aleve as these medications may worsen kidney function. It is okay to give Tylenol (acetaminophen) for pain or fever.
- The doctor may ask you to check urine for protein at home using dipsticks. Keep track of these results and share them with the doctor at appointments.

Reasons to call the doctor:
- Illness (cold, flu, etc.)
- Fever (101.5 F or higher)
- Urine dip sticks are 2-3+ for 2-3 days
- Immediate questions or concerns
- Complaints of belly pain – check to see if patient is able to jump up and down, if not call the doctor and go to the nearest emergency room

Location and Appointments
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Notes: