

ANTI-GBM (GOODPASTURE'S DISEASE)

WHAT IS ANTI-GBM (GOODPASTURE'S DISEASE)?

Anti-glomerular basement membrane (GBM) disease, also known as Goodpasture's disease, is a rare condition that causes inflammation of the small blood vessels in the kidneys and lungs.

SYMPTOMS

The kidneys, the lungs, or both may be affected. About fifty percent of patients have lung disease in addition to kidney disease. Isolated lung disease is very rare. Kidney involvement may not cause symptoms at first, although blood and protein may be detected in the urine. As the disease progresses, patients may develop signs of kidney failure such as tiredness, poor appetite, decreased urine production, breathlessness and leg swelling. When the lungs are involved, patients may have severe breathless, dry cough, or coughing up blood.

CAUSE

The disease occurs when the body's immune system attacks the lining of the small blood vessels in the kidneys and lungs. It is not currently known why this occurs, although people with a particular "tissue type" seem to be at greater risk. Lung involvement is more common in cigarette smokers, and it is thought smoking may also be a trigger for developing the disease.

TREATMENT

Treatment requires a process called plasma exchange, which involves the use of a machine to remove anti-GBM antibodies from the bloodstream. This is often done daily for 2 weeks. In addition, immunosuppressive drugs such as steroids and cyclophosphamide, are used to suppress inflammation and stop further antibody production. Treatment usually continues for 6 months after the diagnosis is made.