

# MICROSCOPIC POLYANGIITIS (MPA)

## What is Microscopic polyangiitis?

Microscopic polyangiitis (MPA) is inflammation of blood vessels throughout the body. It is called systemic vasculitis because it affects different areas of the body and not just one site.

## What causes MPA?

The cause of MPA is unknown, but it is not contagious. MPA is an inflammation of the small and medium sized vessel walls that can affect different parts of the body including (but not limited to) the kidneys, lungs, and sinuses.

## Who gets MPA?

The typical MPA patient is middle-aged. However, the disease may occur in people of all ages, both genders and all ethnic backgrounds.

## What are the symptoms?

Blood in the urine (often microscopic and not visible to the eye) and/or a decrease in the amount of urine may show evidence of renal involvement. Approximately 90% of patients with MPA have kidney involvement. Symptoms may include fever, joint and muscle pains, weakness, lack of energy and weight loss.

Lung symptoms such as shortness of breath, coughing up blood and/or chest pain are experienced in about 50% of the patients.

Symptoms of the upper airway (sinuses, ears) may occur, but are less common or milder than kidney or lung symptoms.

The eyes and the nervous system may also be affected by the disease.

A skin rash is sometimes seen.

The stomach and intestinal tract may also be affected by the disease.

## How is MPA diagnosed?

The diagnosis of MPA is typically established with a biopsy of the skin or kidney, but may also be done in other organs.

## What is the prognosis?

Treatment with immunosuppressive agents has proven effective.

## What is the treatment?

Treatment usually includes a combination of steroids with either oral or intravenous cyclophosphamide. Low-dose weekly oral methotrexate has been tried in patients with MPA without severe inflammation from the disease.

Patients who are dialysis-dependent or have pulmonary hemorrhage at presentation seem to benefit from plasmapheresis.

Maintenance therapy includes immunosuppressive agents.

## What is Vasculitis?

Vasculitis is an inflammation of the blood vessels, arteries, veins or capillaries. Vasculitis is a family of diseases. The cause of vasculitis is unknown, but through research and treatment, outcomes have improved significantly over the past 20 years.

Continued research is essential for further advances in these diseases, which can be life-threatening.

## About the Vasculitis Foundation

The Vasculitis Foundation (VF) is the largest international patient support group for people with vasculitis.

Through its website, newsletter, brochures, informational materials, medical consultants, symposia and chapters, VF raises awareness and educates its patients, family members and friends.



Support

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[www.VasculitisFoundation.org](http://www.VasculitisFoundation.org)

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