

Science in Plain Sight:

Research made easy to understand

Lower proteinuria is better for patients with IgA nephropathy: a systematic review. January 6, 2026.

Shah A, Maski M, Egbuna O, Longstaff W, Stricker-Shaver J, Barber B. *Front Nephrol.* 2026;5:1722582. doi: 10.3389/fneph.2025.1722582

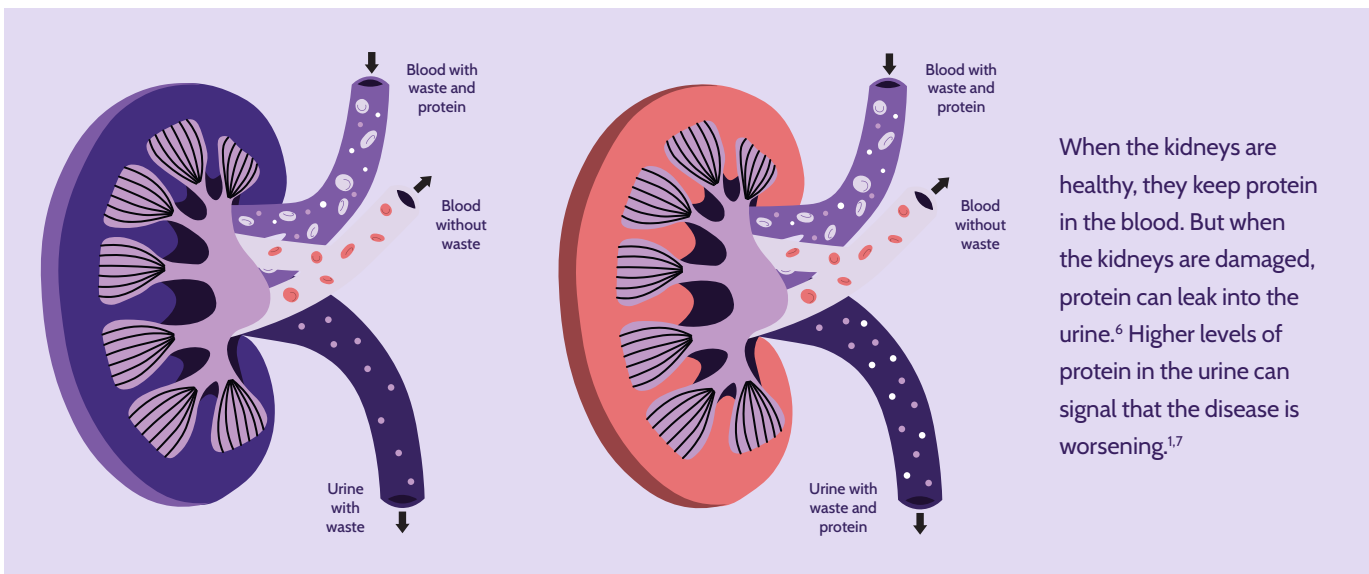
For people living with IgA nephropathy (IgAN), **understanding protein levels in the urine (proteinuria) is a critical part of managing this progressive, serious disease.**^{1,2} This overview highlights key findings from a comprehensive analysis of over 20 years of published studies (systematic review) included in Volume 5 of *Frontiers in Nephrology*.¹

This research underscores the importance of reducing proteinuria to improve long-term kidney outcomes.¹

What is proteinuria and why does it matter?

IgAN is a serious, progressive, life-threatening kidney disease driven by uncontrolled B cell activity.³⁻⁵

One of the **most important markers of disease activity is proteinuria**, which tells you how much protein is in the urine.^{1,2} Protein in the urine typically indicates a problem with the kidneys.⁶



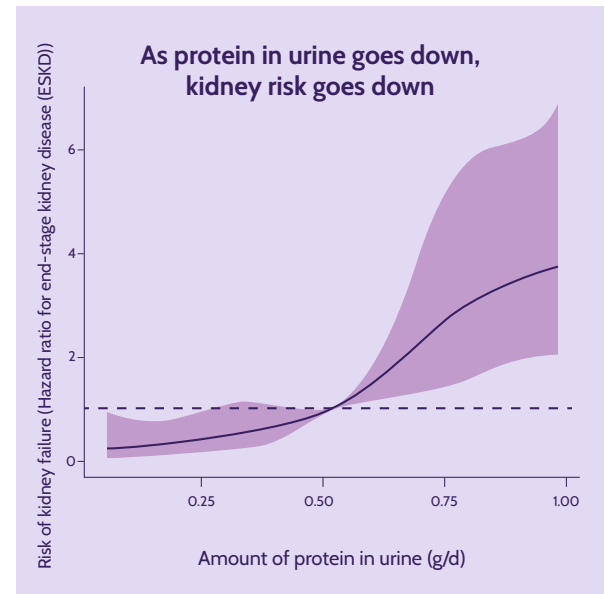
Because of growing evidence linking lower protein levels in the urine to improved kidney outcomes, updated clinical guidelines from **KDIGO** (Kidney Disease: Improving Global Outcomes) now recommend aiming for proteinuria levels below 0.5 grams per day, or preferably below 0.3 grams per day.^{1,7}

What did this publication conclude about proteinuria levels and long-term outcomes?

In this publication, researchers analyzed 21 studies published between 2006 and 2025 to better understand how proteinuria affects kidney health in people living with IgAN.¹

Across studies including more than 13,000 people with IgAN, **the results were clear: higher levels of protein in the urine were linked to poorer health outcomes.**¹

When proteinuria levels were higher (≥ 0.5 g/day or equivalent), people with IgAN had a greater risk of serious complications, including¹:



Adapted from Shah et al., 2026 (Figure 5)¹; licensed under Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY).

What does this mean for people living with IgAN?

This research reinforces that **lowering protein in the urine is central to managing IgAN and improving long-term outcomes:**



Proteinuria is a key marker of disease activity, and consistently lower levels are associated with better kidney health.^{1,7}



Current evidence and updated clinical guidelines now emphasize achieving proteinuria below 0.5 g/day (or preferably below 0.3 g/day), as patients who reach this level experience significantly better outcomes than those with higher levels.^{1,7}



Routine monitoring remains essential to track disease activity and ensure treatments are effectively reducing proteinuria and slowing disease progression.^{1,7}

REFERENCES

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