Blood in the urine

Haematuria is a condition in which red blood cells appear in the urine. Gross haematuria can be seen with the naked eye. The urine in this case is red in colour, pink or brownish. Microscopic haematuria involves small quantities of blood which are examined with the help of a microscope.

Haematuria can be a sign of different urological (urinary system) diseases such as urinary tract infection, kidney stone, bladder stone, ureteral stone, tumour in the ureter (the narrow duct that conveys urine from the kidney to the urinary bladder), urinary bladder, prostate and urethra. Haematuria that causes pain often indicates an infection or stone while painless haematuria may be a sign of a tumour. Usually, diagnosis is based on medical history, urinalysis, intravenous pyelogram (a radiological procedure used to spot abnormalities of the urinary system) and cystoscopy (a tubular instrument equipped with a light and used to examine the interior of the urinary bladder).

Treatment for haematuria depends on the cause. Antibiotics is an effective way for treating urinary tract infection. If a tumour is detected, minimally invasive surgery can be used to remove it. For kidney stones, lithotripsy (shock waves) is often used to break the stone into small pieces that can be discharged through the urinary system. For larger stones, a more complicated procedure, called percutaneous nephrolithotripsy, may be used.

The best way to prevent haematuria is to lower the risk of urological diseases. Drinking more water helps prevent kidney stones from forming. Smoking is a major risk factor for bladder cancer. So quitting smoking may also help prevent haematuria.