

ITP - Idiopathic Thrombocytopenic Purpura

Author: Katie Hammond, Paediatric Staff Nurse



James Paget
University Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

What is Idiopathic Thrombocytopenic Purpura?

ITP is a condition where your child has developed serious bruising on their body caused by a low platelet count. Why this happens is not known, but it usually follows a viral infection. "Idiopathic" means "of unknown cause". It is known that the immune system stops working properly and begins attacking part of the blood called platelets, as if these cells are foreign and need to be destroyed.

What are platelets?

Platelets are one of the three types of cells in the blood along with red and white cells. Platelets are small and sticky and their job is to stop bleeding after an injury. They are produced by the bone marrow and then travel around in the blood stream.

What are the symptoms of ITP?

Bruising over the body and some bleeding may occur from the nose and gums. Children who have low platelet count will have pinprick blood spots under the skin, normally called petechiae. Girls may experience heavy periods too.

How is ITP diagnosed?

ITP is normally diagnosed by a blood test, which will identify a low platelet count. The low platelet count, along with your child's symptoms, will indicate ITP.

How common is ITP?

About four in every 100,000 children develop ITP each year.

How is ITP treated?

Most children do not need any treatment and improve on their own. With serious bruising and bleeding your child may be treated with steroids for a short time in an attempt to increase their platelet count.

What is the outlook for children with ITP?

Just as we do not understand what causes ITP, we do not understand why children suddenly recover from it. Most children will recover within a few weeks or months and will require repeat blood tests to check if the platelets are increasing. Some children have a low count for some years before it improves.

How will ITP affect my child?

Children's lives are not restricted by the low platelets, but it may be sensible to avoid sports where the risk of bruising or cutting themselves and bleeding is high.

ITP in children produces frightening symptoms but in most cases children have no long term effects from the condition.

Feedback

We want your visit to be as comfortable as possible. Please talk to the person in charge if you have any concerns. If the ward/department staff are unable to resolve your concern, please ask for our Patient Advice and Liaison (PALS) information. Please be assured that raising a concern will not impact on your care. **Before you leave the hospital you will be asked to complete a Friends and Family Test feedback card.** Providing your feedback is vital in helping to transform NHS services and to support patient choice.

Trust Values

- Courtesy and respect
- A welcoming and positive attitude
- Polite, friendly and interested in people
- Value and respect people as individuals
So people feel **welcome**
- Attentively kind and helpful
- Look out for dignity, privacy & humanity
- Attentive, responsive & take time to help
- Visible presence of staff to provide care
So people feel **cared for**

Responsive communication

- Listen to people & answer their questions
- Keep people clearly informed
- Involve people
So people feel **in control**
- Effective and professional
- Safe, knowledgeable and reassuring
- Effective care / services from joined up teams
- Organised and timely, looking to improve
So people feel **safe**



The hospital can arrange for an interpreter or person to sign to assist you in communicating effectively with staff during your stay. Please let us know.

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