

WHAT IS ITP?

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I.T.P. or Idiopathic Thrombocytopenic Purpura is also known as Primary Immune Thrombocytopenic Purpura and Autoimmune Thrombocytopenic Purpura. Idiopathic is a term used in allopathic medicine (western medicine) when the cause of the disease or condition is not known. Thrombocytopenic is defined as low levels of platelets in the blood. Purpura is a term used to describe purple bruises caused by bleeding underneath the skin.

ITP is a condition of decreased circulating platelets (thrombocytes), poor platelet quality, and/or symptoms of bleeding in which the blood does not clot in a normal manner. Platelets, which are essential in the clotting process (coagulation) are made in your bone marrow and circulate in the body through your blood vessels. Their main function is to help stop bleeding by sticking together and sealing small cuts or breaks in the vessels.

There are 2 types of ITP: acute (temporary) and chronic (long-term). Acute ITP, which usually last less than 6 months, mainly occurs in children after an infection caused by a virus. Chronic ITP, which lasts longer than 6 months, mainly affects adults but can also be found in teenagers and younger children. Treatments usually depend on the severity of the bleeding symptoms or the levels of the platelet count.

Symptoms of ITP can vary but in general any kind of bleeding that is hard to stop might be a sign of low platelet counts or poor coagulation function. In general the more bleeding symptoms you have the greater chance the platelet levels are low or the platelet quality is poor. Here are some of the common symptoms associated with ITP:

1. **Bruising or Purpura** is caused by hemorrhages under the skin and in mucous membranes that result in the appearance of purple spots or patches. People with ITP may have large or scattered bruises from injury or in many cases from no apparent trauma at all. More extensive bleeding can create a mass of blood called a hematoma.
2. **Petechiae** are tiny pinpoint red dots on the skin caused by broken blood vessels or leaks in capillary walls. These are often found on the legs, chest and arms and may look like a rash.
3. **Bleeding in the mouth** or in and around the gums. Bleeding in the gums may show up when dental work is done. Blood blisters may also be a symptom.
4. **Nosebleeds** or other forms of bleeding that is hard to stop like a cut from a razor when shaving.
5. **Blood in the urine**, bowel movement (stool) or vomit.
6. **Bleeding in the head/brain** due to ITP is rare but is the most dangerous symptom of ITP.
7. **Heavy menstrual bleeding** may be experienced by women with ITP.

Is there a cure? In western medicine, there is no cure for ITP. There are only symptomatic treatments available and unfortunately many of these may have harmful side effects. Some people report that dietary or life-style changes help them feel better and improve their platelet counts. At this time, western medicine offers no way to predict the course of this disease.

We have our own opinion of ITP. We do not believe that ITP is primarily an autoimmune disorder where the immune system, for some unknown reason, attacks the platelets and causes a decrease in platelet counts and/or bleeding symptoms. Instead, we believe that in a majority of adults and children with ITP, there are a combination of inherited or acquired platelet "quality" problems and immune dysfunction (mainly immunodeficiency) as the underlying cause.

For the majority of people with ITP, there are rarely any apparent serious health conditions that trigger this disorder. We believe that some potential causes can be from factors such as: bacterial or viral infections, hormonal imbalances, physical or emotional stresses, nutritional deficiencies, digestive disorders as well as chronic and acute chemical intoxications.

Our literature, anecdotal research and experience in the last 10 years has indicated that the application of western medicine based, aggressive immunosuppressive therapies may cause ITP to worsen. This may create a need for continued therapy, hospitalization, splenectomy and a lower chance for people to achieve natural remission or stabilization of the disease. There are some individuals that may have ITP as the symptom of another disease (eg. Evans Syndrome, Lupus, Common Variable Immune Deficiency) or people who have been on a very high dosage of corticosteroids, Winhro or IVIG infusions.

Broadly speaking, western treatment targets the symptoms of disease rather than the cause of the problem. For example, asthma patients are often given western treatments that address the blockage of immunological reactions with antihistamines, corticosteroid, antileukotrienes, and bronchodilators. These treatments rarely result in the reversal of the disease, and may actually bring about significant side effects and increase the chances of making the disease chronic. In the case of ITP, certain powerful immunosuppressive drugs may actually raise platelet counts. However, the underlying imbalance of the body that caused ITP in the first place remains unchanged. People could have relapses, thrombosis (blood clot in the blood vessel) and increased bleeding risk, despite the platelet counts being higher or even in normal range.

Is there a safer natural approach? Our anecdotal research revealed that people with ITP can benefit from using natural methods to support proper balance and detoxification. Some potential approaches that may help the body heal naturally include:

1. Healthy dietary or lifestyle changes.
2. Protocols that support detoxification and/or minimize exposure to environmental toxins.
3. Stress reducing activities like yoga, tai chi, meditation and prayer.
4. Dietary supplements like vitamins, herbs and homeopathic combinations.
5. Therapies that help to release emotional negativity.
6. Protocols focused on improving the tissue health and promoting normal function of the involved tissues.

Effective herbal therapies: The goal for any herbal therapy includes several components. The primary purpose would be to improve tissue quality through improved nutrition and circulation. Detoxification is another very important aim as patients with lower circulation and toxic exposure are susceptible to higher levels of toxin accumulation. "Tissue energy" is a foreign term to most western clinicians. It is known as the "chi energy" in Eastern medicine and represents the vitality of the cells. Without chi energy, cells suffer from the actions of a confused immune system, toxicity, and decreased nutrition. Because of this, the tissues are more liable to develop either autoimmune disease or cancer. Enhancing the vital energy of the cells contributes to clearing toxic buildup and to improving cellular function. Hormone balancing is another goal of therapy, balancing estrogen and androgens in the body. Lastly, herbal therapy should be designed to balance and normalize the immune system.

Our philosophy is to look at ITP as a whole body imbalance. The goal for a natural herbal therapy is to support the body's ability to:

1. Improve detoxification of harmful substances.
2. Stop excessive bleeding (internal and external) as quickly as possible and improve the platelet and endothelial function.
3. Eliminate triggering and disease maintaining factors.
4. Improve the platelet quality and immune function in order to reverse platelet destruction.
5. Allow the body's mechanisms to eliminate the side effects of the standard drugs for ITP and regain balance.

In conclusion, the body does have its own capability of limiting the effects of a low platelet count, and can prevent severe bleeding symptoms. Left untreated, we believe that up to 90% of children and more than 40% of adults with ITP symptoms (onset or relapses) can achieve a clinical and laboratory remissions in 6 weeks to 6 months. It is also possible to live a relatively normal quality of life with lower than 50K healthy platelets when clinical and laboratory remission is not achieved.

Each individual has their own unique and natural healing ability. One simply needs to discover what natural healing modalities work best for them. We believe, as Paracelsus did, that “God (Nature) has not given human-kind any disease without a cure for it.”*

Sources

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