

# Understanding Immune\* Thrombocytopenia (ITP)

\*formerly referred to as idiopathic

## Hematology

Immune thrombocytopenia (THROM-bo-sigh-toe-PEA-nee-ah), or ITP, is a rare and potentially serious blood disorder.

ITP is characterized by the **improper functioning or destruction of platelets**. **Platelets** are blood cells that allow the blood to clot properly.

 **Low platelet counts** create an **increased risk** of bleeding and bruising.

## Stages of ITP



 **Spontaneous remission** can occur at each stage of ITP. Symptoms **may return** following remission.

 Chronic ITP mostly affects adults and **may require treatment** to increase or maintain the platelet count.

## ITP by the Numbers

ITP affects approximately  
**1 in 50,000**  
**adults** each year

Chronic ITP affects **women**  
**2 to 3 times**  
more often than men

## Symptoms

- Visible **red or purple dots**
- **Bleeding gums** often during dental work
- **Easy bruising**
- Spontaneous **nose bleeds**
- **Prolonged bleeding** from wounds

## The Challenges of Living with ITP

The potential for drops in platelet counts may cause emotional distress. People describe living with ITP as being on a “rollercoaster.”

- **Fatigue**
- **Decreased libido**
- **Embarrassment** due to visible symptoms
- Hindered **ability to work**

**The cause of ITP is unknown in the majority of cases.**

### Resources

- 1 “Immune Thrombocytopenia.” *U.S. National Institutes of Health website*. U.S. National Institutes of Health. Web. 2 August 2016.
- 2 Imbach, Paul. “Guide to Understanding ITP (Immune thrombocytopenia).” *ITP Foundation and ICIS Basel Switzerland*. 2011. PDF file.
- 3 George, James N., et al. “Idiopathic thrombocytopenic purpura: a practice guideline developed by explicit methods for the American Society of Hematology.” *Blood* 88.1 (1996): 3-40.
- 4 Fogarty, Patrick F.,v and Jodi B. Segal. “The epidemiology of immune thrombocytopenic purpura.” *Current opinion in hematology* 14.5 (2007): 515-519.
- 5 Mathias, Susan D., et al. “Impact of chronic Immune Thrombocytopenic Purpura (ITP) on health-related quality of life: a conceptual model starting with the patient perspective.” *Health and quality of life outcomes* 6.1 (2008): 1.