

How to recognise a relapse of your ITP

Information for patients and carers from the Haematology Department

Immune thrombocytopenic purpura (ITP) is a very unpredictable condition. Some patients can experience relapses throughout the course of the condition and these can be quite serious. Because of this, it is very important to recognise these relapses and know what you need to do should they happen.

What are the symptoms to look out for?

The symptoms of a relapse may be similar to those you had when you were first diagnosed with ITP. In general, patients appear and feel perfectly well. As such, you may have no symptoms of ITP until your platelet count is extremely low.

Symptoms of a relapse of your ITP may include the following.

- Unusual, unexplained bruising, or bruising easily.
- A rash of small red dots (petechiae) which does not blanch (go pale) with pressure. Often these appear on the lower part of your legs, but they can be anywhere.
- Bleeding from any area of your body including your gums.
- Blood blisters in your mouth or on your tongue.
- Regular nosebleeds that take a long time to stop.
- For women: abnormal menstruation (heavy bleeding during your period).
- You may have blood in your urine (haematuria) or when you have your bowels open (your stool can be very dark in colour, even black).
- Intra cerebral bleeding (bleeding into the head) is very rare but could cause severe headaches, blurred vision, or loss of consciousness in some cases.



What should I do if I get any of these symptoms?

If you feel well but have a problem with increased bruising or minor bleeding, or you have other concerns, you can contact the **ITP nurse specialist or the Haematology Department during normal working hours, which are Monday to Friday 8:30am to 4:30pm (excluding Bank Holidays)**. We can arrange for you to have a full blood count to check your platelet count, if this is necessary.

If it is out of normal working hours or you are feeling unwell and have symptoms of bleeding, we advise you to get medical advice at your nearest Emergency Department (this is currently, either the Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother (QEQM) Hospital Margate or William Harvey Hospital (WHH) Ashford).

This leaflet has been produced with and for patients

If you would like this information in **another language, audio, Braille, Easy Read, or large print** please ask a member of staff. You can ask someone to contact us on your behalf.

Any complaints, comments, concerns, or compliments please speak to your doctor or nurse, or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01227 78 31 45, or email ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net

Patients should not bring in large sums of money or valuables into hospital. Please note that East Kent Hospitals accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property, unless the property had been handed in to Trust staff for safe-keeping.

Further patient leaflets are available via the East Kent Hospitals web site www.ekhufft.nhs.uk/patientinformation