



Living with ITP Lifestyle and Diet

ITP Lifestyle Suggestions – 20 Steps to Better Health

Having a rare and chronic disease like ITP can make you feel helpless. But there are steps you can take, and small lifestyle changes you can make that may unlock your healing response and, in general, improve the way you feel.

We have gathered the following list of ideas and provided additional reference links to help get you started. Just pick a few of your favorite and try them out. You can always add more later. Get your family and friends to join you. Everyone can benefit!

1. **Breathe** – Take 20 minutes a day to just breathe slowly and deeply, raising and lowering your abdomen. Breathing slowly reduces stress and activates neurotransmitters found in the lungs.
Find more on this topic at:
<http://www.health.harvard.edu/mind-and-mood/relaxation-techniques-breath-control-helps-quiet-errant-stress-response>
2. **Avoid Toxins** – Use natural cleaning products, natural pesticides, low volatile paints, organic fertilizers, etc. Avoid perfumes and scented products. Chemicals and pesticides have been shown to interfere with the immune system and create unhealthy free radicals in the body.
Find more on this topic at:
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3018511/>
<https://www.livestrong.com/article/13726000-how-to-wash-vegetables-and-fruits/>
http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/health/2009-10-22-insecticides-autoimmune_N.htm
3. **Avoid Plastic Containers** – Store food in ceramic or glass dishes and containers. The chemicals in plastics have been shown to interfere with cell development.
Find more on this topic at:
<https://www.niehs.nih.gov/health/topics/agents/endocrine/>
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/21899826/>
4. **Reduce Stress** – Consider the people and situations that create stress in your life and try to find ways to reduce the stress. Stress has been shown to aggravate many diseases. Yoga and meditation often help.
Find more on this topic at:
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/18190880>
<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/stress/stress-management.htm>
5. **Think Positive** – Imagine yourself well. Replace any negative thoughts with positive ones. Think of positive things you want to happen in the future. According to many research studies, positive thinking can enhance your chances of feeling better.
Find more on this topic at:
<http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/positive-thinking/art-20043950?pg=2>

6. **Spirituality** – For many patients, spirituality is important and influences key outcomes in illness, such as quality of life and medical care decisions.
Find more on this topic at:
<https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/news/press-releases/spirituality-better-health-outcomes-patient-care/>
7. **Consider Energy Therapy** – Reiki, Qi-gong, and other subtle energy therapies can activate a healing response. Learn these and practice them yourself or seek a qualified practitioner.
Find more on this topic at: <https://www.pdsa.org/energy-therapy.html>
8. **Exercise** – Find an exercise program you like and that fits your health situation. It could be walking, yoga, or dancing. The benefits of physical activity cannot be overstated!
Find more on this topic at:
<http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/fitness/in-depth/exercise/art-20048389>
<https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/basics/pa-health/>
9. **Breathe Clean Air** – Avoid smoky (and smoking), musty, dusty environments. Particulates and mold can cause or exacerbate autoimmune diseases.
Find more on this topic at:
<https://www.nrdc.org/stories/how-protect-yourself-outdoor-air-pollutants>
<https://www.niehs.nih.gov/health/topics/agents/air-pollution/>
10. **Avoid Mercury** – Mercury has been shown to exacerbate autoimmune disease. If you need a tooth filled, avoid mercury fillings. Avoid eating fish high in mercury. Dispose of mercury thermometers.
Find more on this topic at:
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3096006/>
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1473138/>
11. **Listen to your body** – Stay in touch with your inner self and follow your body’s suggestions if they are health-oriented. Sleep when you need rest. Eat when you’re hungry. Stay in the sun when your body wants the warmth.
Find more on this topic at:
<https://ahha.org/selfhelp-articles/listen-to-your-body/>
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/intl/blog/dont-worry-mom/201410/listening-your-body>
12. **Be with People who Enliven You** – Sometimes you feel better after being with someone. Other times you may feel depleted or drained. Choose to be with people who brighten your spirits.
Find more on this topic at:
<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000602.htm>
13. **Take Time for your Favorite Things** – Bring as much joy into your life as possible. Listen to music. Grow flowers. Watch the birds and rabbits. Sing. Make your own list.
Find more on this topic at:
<https://www.mindbodygreen.com/0-20086/15-ways-to-bring-more-joy-into-your-life-today.html>
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/intl/blog/now-is-everything/201106/50-ways-add-joy-your-day>
14. **Reduce Negative Input** – Reduce the amount of time you spend watching the news, reading scary stories, and watching TV shows with violent themes. These have been shown to promote stress reactions.
Find more on this topic at:
<https://livewellwellnesscenters.wordpress.com/2012/08/15/10-powerful-ways-to-remove-the-negativity-from-your-life/>

- 15. Live in a Positive Space** – Remove clutter from your environment. Organize your things. Fix anything that’s broken. Clean. Surround yourself with items that help you smile and feel good.
Find more on this topic at:
<http://www.veranda.com/decorating-ideas/tips/a1041/peaceful-decor/>
<https://residential-acoustics.com/5-ways-to-create-a-peaceful-living-environment/>
- 16. Get the Right Amount of Sleep** – Attempt to sleep seven to nine hours each night. Research has shown that both too little and too much sleep can aggravate health problems. Ayurvedic medicine recommends that you go to bed before 10:00 PM and arise around 6:00 AM for optimal health.
Find more on this topic at:
<http://healthysleep.med.harvard.edu/healthy/science/what/characteristics>
- 17. Avoid Allergic Triggers** – Find out if you are allergic to any food and other things around you, then eliminate or avoid them, if possible. For example: use a HEPA filter vacuum and/or air cleaner and dust protector pillowcases if you are allergic to dust. Allergic reactions are another sign of an overactive and misguided immune system.
Find more on this topic at:
http://www.onhealth.com/content/1/allergy_causes
<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/food-allergy/symptoms-causes/syc-20355095>
- 18. Do Fun Things** – Create opportunities to smile and laugh. Know what brightens your spirits and puts a grin on your face, and then find time to do these things.
Find more on this topic at:
<http://tinybuddha.com/blog/50-creative-cheap-ways-to-have-fun/>
<https://afineparent.com/lighten-up/fun-things-to-do-with-kids.html>
- 19. Avoid Drugs, Herbs, Foods and Supplements That Can Interfere with Platelets** - Medical literature is filled with accounts of products that can reduce platelet counts or inhibit their action. While some of these are allergic reactions and will not apply to everyone, it is good to know the possibilities.
Visit www.pdsa.org/about-ityp/warnings.html for a detailed list.
Find more on this topic at:
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23111864>
<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000556.htm>
- 20. Get Help and Hugs** - Find others who will listen. Talk about your feelings. Ask for help when you need it and accept the help that’s offered. Bask in hugs and warmth!
Find more on this topic at:
<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000602.htm>

Diet Suggestions for Those Living with ITP

The power of a healthy lifestyle is undeniable for anyone. While there is no single diet or regimen that will relieve the symptoms of ITP, you can support your immune system by making your lifestyle a healthier one. The foods we consume directly affect our bodies and our health. For ITP patients, in particular, diet plays an important role in the body's healing response.

In PDSA's 2001 **Survey of Non-Traditional Treatments in ITP**, about 40% of survey respondents reported some improvement in their bleeding symptoms and their platelet count with either the macrobiotic diet or the diet recommended in "Eat Right for Your Type" by Dr. Peter J. D'Adamo. Less success was reported for the Atkins, Zone, high protein, and low carbohydrate diets. Visit pdsa.org/diet-lifestyle to learn more.

If you are ready to make changes to your diet, it is recommended that you make changes slowly so your body can adjust. Sometimes, diet changes can cause withdrawal and detoxification symptoms as new foods are introduced and your old diet sources are eliminated.

We offer the following helpful guidelines, based on principals from the macrobiotic and "Eat Right" diet, general nutritional research, and research linking the impact of diet changes on other diseases that have common features with ITP, to improve your overall diet. Of course, be sure to discuss any diet changes with your physician.

Eat More...

Fresh, whole foods – Whole foods, or those from as close to their natural source as possible, including vegetables, fruits, whole grains, nuts, and legumes hold their fiber as well as the beneficial phytochemicals and nutrients often removed in processed foods.

Healthy fats – Choose cold pressed oils such as olive or canola for cooking and baking.

Leafy greens – Leafy greens, including kale, collard greens, and spinach are a great source of vitamin K, calcium and minerals, which promote clotting and can also help fight fatigue. Sea vegetables, like seaweed, are also beneficial.

Organic, unsprayed foods – Choose unsprayed foods grown using natural fertilizers to help avoid chemical pesticides and herbicides that have been shown to exacerbate autoimmune diseases and lower platelets. Additives and preservatives can increase the disease-causing free radicals in your body.

Eat Less...

Canned and frozen foods and leftovers – The nutritional value of food deteriorates with time.

Wheat products, white flour, white rice, and processed foods – Try a wheat and/or gluten-free diet. Rely on whole grains such as brown rice, millet or quinoa that do not contain gluten. Reduce the amount of white rice and processed grains. Processed grains are stripped of their natural nutrient-rich coating. Gluten may exacerbate autoimmune diseases in individuals sensitive to the substance.

Hydrogenated, partially hydrogenated or trans-fats – It's recommended to eat very little or no hydrogenated, partially hydrogenated, or trans-fats, which have been shown to contribute to free radical damage. Also try to reduce the amount of deep-fried food that can add to the free radical load.

Sugar – Reduce the amount of white refined sugar as well as fructose, corn syrup, honey, and other sweeteners; also limit fruit and fruit juice. Sugar has been shown to alter internal pH levels resulting in a more acidic body, which is believed to promote disease.

Dairy products – Reduce or eliminate milk, cheese, ice cream and yogurt from your diet based on your reaction to these foods and other dietary needs. Dairy foods have been shown to contribute to mucus formation and exacerbate some autoimmune diseases.

Meat – Rely on lean, white fish, whole grains, beans, and some nuts for protein. Meat is often laced with residual antibiotics, hormones, and saturated fat.

Alcoholic beverages – Alcohol can damage bone marrow.

Foods that can interfere with blood clotting – Blueberries, red/purple grape products, garlic, onions, ginger, ginseng, and tomatoes have all been shown to prevent blood clotting.

Quinine – Avoid food and drinks containing quinine, including tonic water and bitter lemon and drinks; these can lower platelets.

Don't Forget...

Drink plenty of filtered or bottled water at room temperature or above – Taking periodic sips of hot water can cleanse impurities from the body; ice water can slow and hinder the digestive process. Tap water may also contain small amounts of harmful chemicals.

Chew your food well – Chewing each bite until it is liquid can aid digestion, aid the passage of nutrients into your blood stream, and promote healthy alkaline blood chemistry.

Many people have delayed food allergies that produce vague and difficult-to-diagnose symptoms – If you don't feel well, consider having a food allergy test.

Visit pdsa.org/diet-lifestyle