



The Science Behind the Diagnosis of ITP

ITP is a diagnosis of exclusion. After your doctor rules out all other causes of low platelets, the diagnosis is often ITP. However, there are many possible causes of low platelets and more are being discovered each year. Therefore, it is possible that the diagnosis of ITP is given when there is an underlying illness, genetic anomaly, environmental trigger or some other reason for low platelets. Without full communication with your doctor, a misdiagnosis can prompt an incorrect or potentially harmful treatment.

Help your doctor determine the correct diagnosis and the best way to manage your condition. Below is a list items to mention to your doctor if you or your child has experienced an episode of low platelets:

- Your platelet count history
- If you've ingested some of the following foods prior to the drop in platelet levels:
 - Wood ear mushrooms
 - Quinine (tonic) water
 - Bitter melon (dark green melon found in Asian grocery stores)
- If you took any new prescription or non-prescription medications prior to the drop in platelets
- If you had any vaccinations or shots in the month prior to the drop in platelets
- If you took any new supplements, vitamins or herbs prior to the drop in platelets
- If you were exposed to pesticides, herbicides or other chemicals
- If you have been diagnosed with lymphoma, lupus, hepatitis C or human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)
- If you have recurrent stomach aches or an ulcer

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- If you had a fever or felt sick prior to the drop in platelets or are currently not feeling well
- If you were bitten by an insect prior to the drop in platelets
- If you were scratched or bitten by an animal or had contact with a new animal prior to the drop in platelets
- If you had poison ivy or other skin irritation
- If you recently traveled to another country
- If others in your family have an autoimmune disease such as lupus, multiple sclerosis (MS), rheumatoid arthritis or thyroid disease
- If others in your family or ancestors have a bleeding disorder or bruise easily
- If you've always bruised easily
- If you have a long history of getting more colds, flu or other infections than your friends
- If you have a hearing problem
- If you experienced swelling or aching in your joints, sun sensitivity rashes, hair loss or the feeling of numbness or "pins and needles" in your extremities
- If you have a history of problems with your thyroid gland
- If you have recently been under a lot of stress
- If you were recently hospitalized or treated for another condition
- If you changed your diet or started a new exercise program
- If you drink more than five alcoholic beverages per week
- If your low platelets seem to go in monthly or periodic cycles

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