

Patient information factsheet

Southampton immune thrombocytopenia (ITP) clinical centre

At the Southampton immune thrombocytopenia (ITP) clinical centre we care for people with ITP and other causes of thrombocytopenia (low platelets).

The centre is open Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 4.30pm.

What is immune thrombocytopenia (ITP)?

Immune thrombocytopenia (ITP) is an autoimmune condition in which the immune system destroys platelets (blood cells that are needed to clot the blood).

If your platelet count is very low, you may experience abnormal bruising and bleeding.

The most common bleeding symptoms of ITP are nosebleeds, bleeding in the mouth, and heavy periods.

Why do I have ITP?

Some people get ITP after having an infection or taking certain medications. ITP is sometimes related to another autoimmune condition, such as rheumatoid arthritis or lupus.

For most people who have ITP, there is no clear cause.

Treatment for ITP

If your platelet count is less than 30 you may need treatment to prevent bleeding. Your doctor will discuss treatment options with you. Options include medicines that suppress your immune system and medicines that boost platelet production in your bone marrow.

What can I do to improve my platelet count?

- If your platelet count is very low, avoid alcohol. Alcohol can suppress platelet counts and function.
- Ask your doctor to check your vitamin D levels. Autoimmune disorders are associated with vitamin D deficiency.
- No diet is known to help treat ITP, but eating foods that are rich in folic acid could help your body to produce more platelets.

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Emergency access

If you have an injury or are experiencing concerning bleeding (particularly if your platelet count is less than 20), seek urgent medical advice via the contact details below:

In working hours

Telephone the haemostasis nurses on **023 8120 4047**.

They will advise if you need to come to the centre for a medical review or treatment.

Out of hours (5pm to 8.30am, weekends and bank holidays)

Go to your local emergency department if:

- you have been bleeding for more than half an hour from a cut or a nosebleed
- you have blood in an unusual place, such as your urine, stool or in vomit
- you have had an injury with excessive pain, swelling or bleeding

Head injuries

If you have had a head injury and your platelet count is less than 50, go to the emergency department immediately for assessment.

If you have drowsiness, vomiting or loss of vision after a head injury, telephone **999**.

Clinics

ITP clinic

Thursdays 1.30 to 4pm

Joint haematology and obstetrics pregnancy clinic (Princess Anne Hospital)

Alternate Tuesday mornings

Staff

Dr Sara Boyce, haematology consultant

Dr Ana Carvalhosa, haematology consultant

Dr Rashid Kazmi, haematology consultant

Dawn Jenner, haemostasis clinical nurse specialist

Selena Lovick, haemostasis clinical nurse specialist

Anica Phillott, haemostasis clinical nurse specialist

Yanli Li, research sister

Contact us

Haemostasis nurse specialists: **023 8120 4047**

Consultant secretary: **023 8120 8862**

UHS switchboard: **02380 777 222**

Appointments: **023 8120 8454**

Email: haemostasis@uhs.nhs.uk

Department of haematology

University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust

Mailpoint 8

C Level

Tremona Road

Southampton

SO16 6YD

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Useful links

The ITP Support Association

Website: www.itpsupport.org.uk

Email: info@itpsupport.org.uk

Access your University Hospital Southampton personal health record:

mymedicalrecord.uhs.nhs.uk

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