

# The ITP Support Association Platelet Reprint Series



## No. 5 – Hayfever and ITP

Platelet article reprinted from: **March 04**

Title: **Hayfever and ITP**

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From time to time ITP sufferers ask about other conditions which have a bearing on their ITP. Shirley Watson has put together the following information drawn from various publications, including a Bedfordshire Health Authority poster, but reminds readers that this is no substitute for advice from a health professional such as a GP or hospital consultant.

### **What is Hayfever**

Hayfever is the popular name for a seasonal form of allergic rhinitis. It is caused by an allergy to pollens and spores, which inflame the mucous membranes lining the nose. This causes sneezing, a runny nose, nasal congestion, and eyes which water and itch.

Depending on what the person is allergic to the hayfever season typically runs from March to September. Tree pollens are most prevalent in spring, grass pollens in summer, and weed pollens in summer and autumn.

ITP sufferers are no more susceptible to hayfever than the rest of the population. However, those who suffer both ITP and hayfever may find that their symptoms present a greater problem if they are also prone to nosebleeds.

### **Preventative Measures**

For some years the pollen count has been given during national weather forecasts and will usually be high during hot and windy weather, especially in heavily vegetated, low-lying areas. During such periods those susceptible to pollen irritation may find it helpful to avoid exposure when the count is high by:

- closing doors and windows at night
- keeping car windows and air vents closed
- wearing sunglasses outside

### **Treatment**

Treatment for hayfever is available from a local pharmacist, who can also offer advice on request about antihistamine tablets, appropriate nasal sprays, eyedrops and (importantly) those products which may be contraindicated for persons with a low platelet count. Pharmacy counter assistants may also be trained to give advice.

You may be asked the following questions:

- Who is the medication for?
- What are the precise symptoms?
- How long have you had the symptoms?
- Have you used any other medication for the condition?
- What other medication are you on?

### **When to see your GP**

It is advisable to visit your GP if you develop the following symptoms:

- tight chest or wheezing
- no relief from medication
- increased nose bleeds

Your doctor may decide to give you a course of injections that can desensitise you to a particular pollen allergen, prior to the next hayfever season.