



**This person (name).....has ITP and may have serious bleeding problems after an injury. Only in extremely rare cases can spontaneous internal bleeding occur.**

**On no account must he/she be given aspirin or products containing aspirin. Ibuprofen is not recommended but paracetamol may be given.**

**ITP is not contagious.**

**What is ITP**

Idiopathic Thrombocytopenic Purpura is a blood disorder in which the body's immune system destroys the platelets in the blood. Platelets act as an initial plug in the clotting mechanism.

Features associated with ITP can be an inability to prevent bleeding after an injury, large multicoloured bruising, (often without apparent cause), numerous small reddish brown bruises, frequent nosebleeds, mouthbleeds, unusually heavy periods, and petachiae - a rash of red, pin-prick sized spots on the skin caused by leaking capillaries. Most patients do not feel unwell despite their tendency to bleed.

**Management**

Many ITP sufferers can be virtually symptom free despite low platelet counts, and require no treatment. For those who do require treatment the main options include steroids, immunoglobulin, immunosuppressants, and for some, surgical removal of the spleen. For very difficult cases there are other drugs which may cause unpleasant side effects.

**Injections and Vaccinations**

Intramuscular injections of all kinds must be avoided, but subcutaneous (under the skin) and intravenous (directly into the vein) injections are permissible.

For individuals on high dose steroids or who have had immunoglobulin during the last three months, live vaccines pose a risk of disseminated infection, and non-live vaccines may not be effective.

**First Aid**

To stop a nosebleed pinch the nose just below the bone, above the nostrils with even gentle pressure. After five minutes remove the hand and keep the patient still for another five minutes. Ice packs are also useful to help stem blood flow.

Seek medical help for any bleeding which cannot be stopped, if any injury shows swelling such as a sprain or strain, or if there is any sign of infection or fever, particularly in patients who have had their spleens removed or are on steroids.

In any accident requiring medical treatment, it is most important that medical staff are informed that the patient has ITP, and show them this leaflet.

Bleeding into the brain is extremely rare, but the signs are usually obvious - intense headache, drowsiness leading to a loss of consciousness, vomiting and weakness of one side of the body. Seek immediate medical help and urgently request a brain scan.

**Personal details (please complete)**

Known medical condition.....  
Known allergies.....  
Drugs currently taken.....  
Emergency contact.....address.....  
.....tel.....