

# Information about ITP for staff at daycare and primary school

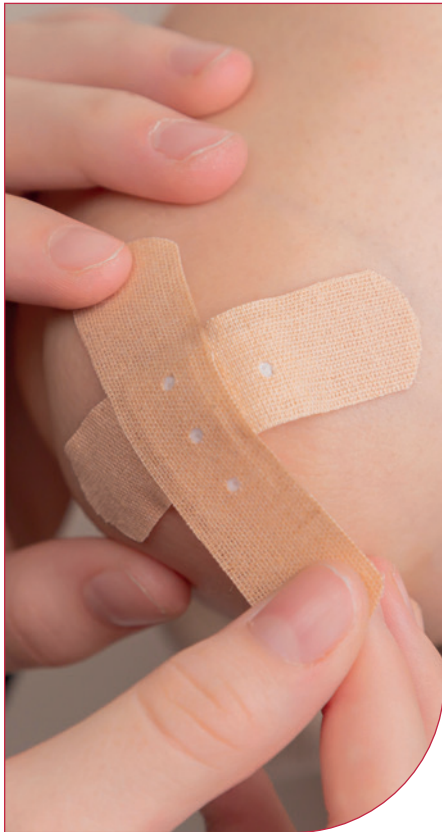


Patiëntenvereniging  
Nederland

## What is ITP?

ITP (Immune thrombocytopenia) is a disorder characterized by an abnormally low number of platelets in the blood. Normally, people have between 150 and 350 million platelets per millilitre. With ITP, the platelet count is (much) less than 100 million platelets per millilitre. It is an autoimmune disease in which the body produces antibodies against the platelets. This accelerates their breakdown.

Why this happens is not clear. ITP can occur after an infection or vaccination. In  $\pm$  80% of children, ITP is temporary and symptoms disappear within a few weeks to a year. Only in a small percentage of children with ITP it turns into a chronic disease.



## How children are impacted by ITP

Platelets are important for blood clotting. If a child does not have enough platelets, he or she has an increased bleeding tendency. In other words, the child may bleed easily. The bleeding may be under the skin (bruising or tiny red dots due to very small bleeding) or in the mouth or gums (nosebleeds, bleeding gums, blood blisters in the mouth). Fatigue also plays a major role with ITP. Children may need more sleep as a result.

## Treatment of ITP

For minor, non-serious bleeding, it is preferable to wait with treatment. For most children with ITP, the doctor will take a wait-and-see approach. But if the bleeding is causing problems, the doctor/ paediatric haematologist will work with the parents to find the most suitable treatment.

## With ITP in the classroom

If the platelet count is only moderately reduced, most activities in daily life and at school or day care can be carried out normally. With very low platelet counts (or with an increasing bleeding tendency), it is best to discuss with the parents which activities the child should avoid.

A child with ITP can continue to play outside and participate in ball games, skipping rope, playing marbles, etc. However, be careful with contact sports and high-risk sports. It is better to wait

with these sports until the platelet count in the blood has returned to a much higher level. For some, the minimum is 70 (million per millilitre), while others can do "everything" again at 30 (million per millilitre).

For children who take swimming lessons, we recommend that they wear water shoes. This is to prevent them from slipping near the sides of the pool. Water shoes are also recommended in open water due to the possibility of sharp objects.

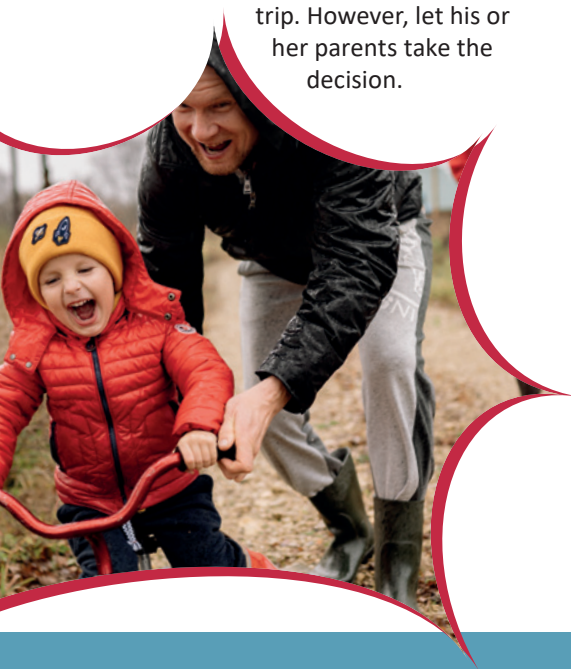


## Classmates

Tell the other children - at their level - that they should be gentle when playing with the child with ITP, but do not scare them. You can explain to the parents of the classmates that it is usually a temporary disorder of the immune system and that it is not contagious. Although (some) care should be taken to protect the child, he or she can still take part in normal, somewhat calm activities.

## School Trips

Depending on the destination of the trip, it may be beneficial if one of the parents joins the trip, or someone with medical experience. If the destination is an amusement park, consult first with the parents of the child with ITP about whether or not their child should join. In some cases, it may be better if the child does not join the trip. However, let his or her parents take the decision.



## Tips

- Make sure the phone numbers of the child's parents, doctor and dentist can be easily found.
- Discuss with the parents of the child with ITP what approach to take regarding playing in the schoolyard and physical education. Accidents will happen. Some parents are very protective, while other parents have a more relaxed attitude towards minor accidents. This often depends on the child's blood levels.
- Make sure your first-aid kit is well-stocked. In children with ITP, wounds can bleed a lot. Apply sufficient pressure to the wound, sometimes for longer than usual. Use plenty of bandages.
- In case of bruises or sprains, cooling with a hot/cold pack can reduce swelling. Keep the hot/cold pack in the freezer.
- If the child with ITP is not very skilled yet at climbing and clambering, cycling or riding a scooter, it is advisable to have him or her wear protection. Discuss this with the parents.

## More information?

For more information, please visit our website, or e-mail or call us.



### Contactgegevens

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