

WHAT DOES aTTP STAND FOR?

aTTP stands for *acquired thrombotic thrombocytopenic purpura*:

- **Acquired** means you were not born with the condition, but rather developed it later in life
- **Thrombotic** refers to the small blood clots that form spontaneously inside blood vessels
- **Thrombocytopenic** means your platelet count is low because they are being used to form small blood clots
- **Purpura** means there is bleeding from small blood vessels under your skin causing small red spots, one of the symptoms of the disease

THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT aTTP

WHAT CAUSES aTTP?

Platelets, one of the most important components in your blood, form blood clots by sticking together when bleeding occurs to seal an injury and prevent further bleeding. A protein called **von Willebrand Factor (vWF)** helps platelets form a clot. vWF activity is regulated by an enzyme called **ADAMTS13**. aTTP occurs when our immune system prevents this enzyme from working correctly, sending the blood clotting process into overdrive and forming small clots throughout the body. These clots can block the flow of blood to organs such as the brain, heart or kidneys and can cause serious or potentially fatal problems such as stroke, heart attack, or kidney failure.

HOW MANY TYPES OF TTP ARE THERE?

2 types

~5%
the inherited form
is rare

~95%
the acquired form
is more common

People suffering from aTTP aren't born with faulty genes, but develop the illness when the body's immune system starts producing the antibodies that stop ADAMTS13 from working properly.¹

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

Each TTP patient is different and they may experience a wide range of symptoms. Initially, many patients may experience general, cold-like symptoms such as a fever.

Symptoms caused by the formation of blood clots include:

- Headaches, confusion and disturbed vision
- Chest pain
- Fatigue, jaundice (a yellowing of the skin and eyes) and dark urine
- Kidney problems

Symptoms of TTP caused by bleeding include:

- Bleeding from the gums or nose
- Purple bruises on the skin, called *purpura*, and red or purple dots on the skin, called *petechiae*

HOW IS aTTP DIAGNOSED?

aTTP is diagnosed based on clinical signs and symptoms, a physical exam and blood tests. Special blood tests can check the level of activity of the ADAMTS13 enzyme and the presence of the ADAMTS13 antibody inhibitor.² aTTP is a rare blood disorder.



Sources:

1. Understanding TTP. <http://www.understandingtpp.com/patient/about-tpp/>, last accessed 29.08.2018
2. <https://rarediseases.info.nih.gov/diseases/4607/thrombotic-thrombocytopenic-purpura-acquired>