



Health Awareness

Fighting Infections: Awareness And Diagnosis Are Critical To Winning The Battle

(NAPSA)—Most people have fought the chicken pox or the flu; some people constantly battle chronic sinusitis, bronchitis or multiple pneumonias; still others never even get a cold. How do infections choose their victims? Only your immune system can answer that question.

Germs affect people in different ways. The immune system serves as the body's defense system, using cells and proteins to recognize and fight thousands of potentially damaging substances, such as cancer cells, blood or tissue from another person, microorganisms, or toxins. If cells or proteins in the immune system have genetic defects, or if they are missing completely, the body can't properly recognize and react to foreign substances, thus leading to infection. People born with a defective immune system have a Primary Immunodeficiency (PI).

Identifying A Problem

While the total number of Americans with a PI is unknown, as many as half of those with one or another of the diseases are currently undiagnosed. Worldwide, there are a variety of immunodeficiency disorders that affect millions of men, women, and children. Immunologists—the researchers and physicians who study the components of the immune system and their function—have identified more than 80 primary immune diseases, including Severe Combined Immunodeficiency (SCID), X-linked Agammaglobulinemia (Bruton's Disease), Common Variable Immune Deficiency (also called Hypogammaglobulinemia) and

10 Warning Signs Of Primary Immunodeficiency

Nearly half of people with a PI are undiagnosed. If you or your child are affected by two or more warning signs, speak to a physician about a possible underlying immunodeficiency.

- Eight or more ear infections within one year
- Two or more serious sinus infections within one year
- Two or more months on antibiotics with little effect
- Two or more pneumonias within one year
- Failure of an infant to gain weight or grow normally.
- Recurrent, deep skin or organ abscesses
- Persistent thrush in mouth or on skin, after age 1
- Need for intravenous antibiotics to clear infection
- Two or more deep-seated infections within one year
- A family history of PI

These warning signs were developed by the Jeffrey Modell Foundation Medical Advisory Board



Selective IgA Deficiency.

How do you know if your immune system is not functioning properly? Indications of a PI range from frequent life-threatening infections and debilitating illnesses to mild or no symptoms.

We all fight infections from time to time, but people with PI often experience two or three infections at a time. Their infections may be common, severe, long-lasting, hard to cure or recurring, like chronic sinusitis (infection and inflammation of the sinuses, air passages in bones of the cheeks, forehead, and jaw) or

chronic bronchitis (infection and inflammation of the airways leading to the lungs). In children, slow growth and development can be deficiency indicators.

Diagnosis & Treatment

Life-changing treatment options differ for each individual, depending on the severity and type of the primary immunodeficiency, but this has not always been the case. Until the early 1980s, immune deficiencies were diagnosed as untreatable, rare diseases. However, in 1981 Bayer Biological Products (BP) introduced IGIV (immunoglobulin intravenous) as a plasma-based therapy for people diagnosed with PI and acquired immune deficiencies. IGIV products, derived from plasma that has been extracted from circulating human blood, contain many therapeutic proteins and protective antibodies used to fight infection by boosting the body's natural defense system.

To diagnose most primary immunodeficiencies, a doctor will conduct a few routine and relatively inexpensive procedures, which include taking a family history, conducting a physical examination and ordering a blood test. People suspecting they may have a PI should consult with a physician. With early diagnosis and proper treatment, people with Primary Immunodeficiencies can control and prevent infections.

For more information, consult your physician; visit Bayer at www.igivnext.com, the Immune Deficiency Foundation at www.primaryimmune.org or The Jeffrey Modell Foundation at www.info4pi.org.