

## About Primary Immunodeficiencies

Primary immunodeficiency diseases (PI) are a group of more than 250 rare, chronic disorders in which part of the body's immune system is missing or functions improperly. While not contagious, these diseases are caused by hereditary or genetic defects, and, although some disorders present at birth or in early childhood, the disorders can affect anyone, regardless of age or gender. Some affect a single part of the immune system; others may affect one or more components of the system.

And while the diseases may differ, they all share one common feature: each results from a defect in one of the functions of the body's normal immune system. Because one of the most important functions of the normal immune system is to protect us against infection, patients with PI commonly have an increased susceptibility to infection.

The infections may be in the skin, the sinuses, the throat, the ears, the lungs, the brain or spinal cord, or in the urinary or intestinal tracts, and the increased vulnerability to infection may include repeated infections, infections that won't clear up or unusually severe infections. People with PI live their entire lives more susceptible to infections—enduring recurrent health problems and often developing serious and debilitating illnesses. Fortunately, with proper medical care, many patients live full and independent lives.

### Is it just an infection?

You should be suspicious if you have an infection that is...

- Severe – requires hospitalization or intravenous antibiotics
- Persistent – won't completely clear up or clears very slowly
- Unusual – caused by an uncommon organism
- Recurrent – keeps coming back or if it
- Runs in the Family – others in your family have had a similar susceptibility to infection

If any of these words describe your infection, the Immune Deficiency Foundation (IDF) recommends that you ask your physician to check for the possibility of PI.

Click here to read more about specific types of PI. If you have further questions, please contact IDF through Ask IDF or call 800-296-4433.

**Is it just an infection?**  
You should be suspicious if you have an infection that is...

Severe  
Persistent  
Unusual  
Recurrent  
Runs in the Family

If any of these words describe your infection, the Immune Deficiency Foundation (IDF) recommends that you ask your physician to check for the possibility of PI.

Click here to read more about specific types of PI. If you have further questions, please contact IDF through Ask IDF or call 800-296-4433.

Immune Deficiency Foundation (IDF) 10000 Rockville Pike, Suite 300, Rockville, MD 20850-1500  
www.primaryimmune.org | 800-296-4433

### Additional Resource

#### *IUIS Classification of Primary Immunodeficiencies*

In April 2014, the Expert Committee of the International Union of Immunological Societies (IUIS) updated the classification of primary immunodeficiencies. In comparison to the previous version, more than 30 new gene defects are reported in this updated version. This classification is the most up-to-date catalog of all known primary immunodeficiencies and acts as a current reference of the knowledge of these conditions and is an important aid for the molecular diagnosis of patients with these rare diseases. Click here to download the article.

- About Us

- [Contact Us](#)
- [Sponsors](#)
- [Volunteer](#)
- [Make a Donation](#)
- [Terms of Use](#)
- [Privacy Policy](#)

Immune Deficiency Foundation, 110 West Road, Suite 300, Towson, Maryland 21204  
Email: [info@primaryimmune.org](mailto:info@primaryimmune.org) Phone: 800-296-4433 © 2015 All Rights Reserved.

