



Managing MPN Symptoms: What Do Experts Recommend for Itching?

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Andrew Schorr:

What about what we call the pruritus, I think is what you call it, but what Sue is talking about, this intolerable itching? A lot of people have that, whether they wanted to take a shower and they have itching, or it just happens at other times.

Dr. Scherber:

Yeah, so, itching's also kind of a complicated symptom. Sometimes, diphenhydramine (Benadryl), antihistamines, can help with itching. Also, there are things like hydroxyzine (Atarax) that can sometimes help with itching. Even some topical medications can sometimes help. The other thing to think about is how—especially if you have ET or PV and have itching—are how are the blood counts doing? Because often when the blood counts go too high, that can actually be a symptom of that.

And I have a fair amount of my PV patients that have horrible itching after showers. But once we get their blood counts under control—it's usually when they first see me—they actually start to feel better. It gets more complicated in myelofibrosis. It seems to be that that itching doesn't always respond as well and sometimes can be in the setting of low blood counts.

Andrew Schorr:

Sue, how's it worked out for you? So, are you still having that problem?

Sue Waite:

Actually, in the last several years, it's gotten better. And I don't know if perhaps I started with PV and didn't catch it before it turned into the myelofibrosis. And I take loratadine (Claritin) every day. That has helped some, the antihistamine.

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