

Thrombocytopenia Information for You

Platelets (Plts) aid our bodies in blood clotting and help prevent bleeding. Thrombocytopenia is when the platelet count is below 100,000. A normal platelet count is 160,000 – 370,000.

Signs and Symptoms

Symptoms may not appear unless the platelet count is very low (i.e. less than 10,000 – 20,000). They may include:

- Bruising
- Bleeding, oozing gums
- Petechiae (little red spots under the skin - like freckles)
- Black tarry stools
- Blood in urine (cloudy to pink to red)
- Nose bleeds

What to Do

- Use a soft toothbrush and avoid flossing
- Avoid using a blade when shaving
- Blow your nose very gently
- Use saline nasal spray or petroleum jelly to keep nostrils moist
- Avoid constipation. Use stool softeners, eat a high fiber diet. Drink plenty of fluids.
- Avoid aspirin and aspirin-containing products
- Avoid non-steroidal inflammatory drugs, i.e., ibuprofen (Advil[®], Motrin[®]) and naproxen (Aleve[®]).
- Use acetaminophen (Tylenol[®]) for minor pain, as this does not affect

how your platelets work

- Avoid activities that carry risk of injury (i.e. contact sports)
- Apply pressure to blood drawing sites for 5 minutes after blood is drawn

Sexual Guidelines

- Consult with your doctor or nurse on the safety of sexual activity as it relates to your blood counts
- Use a water-soluble lubricant during sexual intercourse (K-Y Jelly[®]) to help reduce trauma to the vaginal tissues

Treatment

Platelet (blood) transfusions may be given if symptoms occur and/or platelet count is less than 10,000 – 20,000.

Phone Numbers

Please feel free to call Dr.

_____ a.m. to
p.m.

at _____ or you can
reach the clinic nurses at

_____ from _____ a.m. to
_____ p.m. if you have questions or
concerns.

Spanish version HFFY#4399s

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 3/2018 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#4493