

ONCOLOGY

After Chemotherapy Care Instructions

Thrombocytopenia

What is thrombocytopenia?

Cancer and cancer therapy can cause thrombocytopenia. Thrombocytopenia is a low number of platelets in the blood. Platelets are the cells that help the blood clot. If you do not have enough platelets, you may bleed anywhere in the body.

What are the symptoms of thrombocytopenia?

- Bruising;
- Bleeding; and
- Rash of tiny, red dots.

What can I do at home to care for myself?

- Take your medicines exactly as prescribed. Call your physician if you think you are having a problem with your medicine.
- Do not take aspirin or anti-inflammatory medicines such as ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) and naproxen (Aleve) unless your physician says it is okay. They may increase the risk of bleeding.
- Avoid contact sports or activities that could cause you to fall or injure yourself.
- Brush your teeth with a soft toothbrush.
- Use an electric razor to shave.
- Blow your nose gently to prevent a nose bleed.

When should I call my physician?

- Your stools are black and tar-like or have streaks of blood.
- You have any unusual bleeding, such as:
 - Blood spots under the skin,
 - A nosebleed that you cannot stop,
 - Bleeding gums when you brush your teeth,

(over)

continued

- Blood in your urine,
- Vaginal bleeding when you are not having your period or heavy bleeding during your period.
- You have severe pain that does not get better.
- Vomiting blood or what looks like coffee grounds.
- Pass maroon or very bloody stools.
- Bleed anywhere and cannot stop it.
- Have signs of a stroke. These may include:
 - Sudden numbness, paralysis, or weakness in your face, arm, or leg, especially on only one side of your body;
 - New problems with walking or balance;
 - Sudden vision changes;
 - Drooling or slurred speech;
 - New problems speaking or understanding simple statements, or feeling confused;
 - A sudden, severe headache that is different from past headaches.
- Need dental clearance before you get any dental work.

If you cannot reach your health care team or your symptoms get worse, go to Urgent Care or the Emergency Department.