



Thrombocytopenia (Low Platelet Count)

Platelets are blood cells that help blood to clot. Thrombocytopenia occurs when your platelet count is low (less than 50,000). When you are thrombocytopenic, you are more prone to bleeding. To prevent bleeding when you are thrombocytopenic, follow these instructions:

Watch for potential bleeding sites daily:

Call your nurse or doctor **immediately** if you have

- new bruising or tiny red or purple spots on your skin
- nosebleed
- bleeding gums
- prolonged bleeding from a wound, procedure, or incision site
- black or bloody stool
- brown or red urine
- increased vaginal bleeding (flow is heavier or lasts longer than normal)
- blood in sputum or vomit
- blurred vision
- confusion
- severe headache
- extreme drowsiness
- fallen and hit your head

Apply firm pressure immediately to any site of bleeding for 5 minutes or until bleeding stops.

Hygienic Precautions:

- Use a soft-bristled toothbrush. Use alcohol-free mouth rinse. Avoid using dental floss and toothpicks. When your mouth and gums are irritated, dentures should not be worn.

- Use an electric razor instead of a safety razor. File nails with an emery board instead of cutting toenails and fingernails.
- Wear shoes or slippers when out of bed.
- Cough and blow your nose gently.
- Avoid using enemas, rectal thermometers, or suppositories.
- Women should not use tampons or douches. They should also count sanitary pads during menstruation.

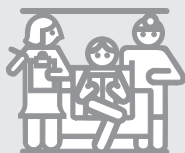
**Activity
Precautions:**

- Avoid restrictive clothing around wrists, waist, or ankles.
- Avoid cutting with sharp knives or working with sharp blades. Wear gloves when gardening.
- Ask your health care provider before starting physical activities or sports
- Use water-based lubricants such as K-Y Jelly to reduce friction during vaginal intercourse. Avoid oral and rectal intercourse.

Prevention:

- Avoid constipation and straining while having a bowel movement. Ask your nurse or doctor for stool softeners or laxatives if needed. Increase fluid intake to 6 to 8 glasses per day and increase fiber in your diet.
- Avoid aspirin or aspirin-containing medications. Check with your nurse or doctor before taking any over-the-counter medications.
- If you have nausea and vomiting, ask your nurse or doctor for anti-nausea medications.

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This information is prepared specifically for patients participating in clinical research at the Warren Grant Magnuson Clinical Center at the National Institutes of Health and is not necessarily applicable to individuals who are patients elsewhere. If you have questions about the information presented here, talk to a member of your healthcare team.

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Nursing Department
National Institutes of Health, CC
Questions about the Clinical Center? OCCC@cc.nih.gov