

## BLEEDING PRECAUTIONS FOR PATIENTS WITH LOW PLATELETS (THROMBOCYTOPENIA PRECAUTIONS)

- Platelets are tiny blood cells. They are made in the bone marrow. They are necessary for formation of a blood clot and prevention of any bleeding. A normal platelet count range is 150,000-400,000.
- Your platelet count may be lower than normal because of the cancer or its treatment. Chemotherapy and some other medications can lower the platelet count and therefore increase risk of bleeding.
- Some medications such as Aspirin can interfere with the function of platelets and can increase risk of bleeding even when the platelet count is normal.
- It is very important to take precautions to reduce risk of bleeding if you have a low platelet count.
- All patients with chemotherapy should take necessary precautions to reduce risk of bleeding.
- You should be able to recognize any signs of bleeding and immediately proceed to the nearest emergency room in the event of any serious bleeding.

### Go to the emergency room immediately if you have:

- Black bowel movements, blood in the stool, or rectal bleeding.
- Blood in your urine.
- Headaches that do not get better, blurred vision, dizziness.
- Excessive skin bruising
- Uncontrolled vaginal bleeding
- Any bleeding that does not get better (coughing up blood, vomiting blood, nose bleeds).
- Any head, chest or abdominal trauma when platelet counts are low.

### Call our office or see your doctor in earlier appointment if you develop any symptoms of bleeding:

- Skin bruising.
- A faint red rash on your abdomen, arms, and legs.
- Vaginal spotting or heavy menstrual bleeding.
- The appearance of broken blood vessels in the "white of the eye" (sclera).

### What can you do if you do develop bleeding at home:

- Apply direct pressure on the bleeding site if it is open area of bleeding skin.
- After applying pressure, call 911 or have your family member take you to the nearest emergency room (ER).
- Apply ice over the bridge of your nose for nosebleeds.
- Do not waste time to try to find your doctor or office staff. Proceed to a nearby ER.

**DO NOT DELAY SEEKING MEDICAL ATTENTION. BLEEDING CAN BE LIFE THREATENING DURING PERIODS OF LOW PLATELET COUNT AND SERIOUS BLEEDING MAY RESULT IN DEATH.**

## BLEEDING PRECAUTIONS FOR PATIENTS WITH LOW PLATELETS (THROMBOCYTOPENIA PRECAUTIONS)

### PRECAUTIONS TO REDUCE RISK OF SERIOUS OF BLEEDING.

- Daily life activities
  - Avoid any head, chest or abdominal trauma.
  - Avoid any falls.
  - Avoid sharp objects such as razor, scissors, and nail clippers. You may carefully use an electric razor.
  - Blow your nose gently. Avoid forceful blowing of the nose.
  - Do not use tampons.
  - Do not take rectal temperature.
  - Do not strain for bowel movements. Consider using stool softeners or laxatives if you are straining during bowel movements.
  - Do not use any rectal suppositories or enemas.
  - Avoid tight clothing such as girdles and tight undergarments or pants.
  - Wear gloves when gardening, cooking, and doing home repairs.
  - Do not have manicures, pedicures, waxing, electrolysis or tattoos.
  - Avoid any activity that may result in injury. This includes any contact sports, climbing ladders, strenuous exercise, bicycling, and weight lifting.
- Sexual activity
  - Use lubrication if needed.
  - Avoid anal or oral intercourse.
  - Avoid strong thrusting.
- Dental/surgical/medical care
  - Use a soft toothbrush.
  - Avoid using dental floss and toothpicks.
  - Speak with your doctor before you have any routine or elective dental work.
  - Avoid any invasive procedures, dental work or surgical procedures.
  - Do not administer any intramuscular injections.
  - Apply pressure to all venipuncture (blood draw) sites for 5 minutes or longer.
  - Inform all of your health care providers that your platelets are low and your risk of bleeding is high.
- Medications
  - Do not take aspirin or products containing aspirin.
  - Use caution with NSAIDS (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs) such as Ibuprofen. Do not use without permission from your doctor.
  - Avoid any medication including over the counter products that increase the risk of bleeding.
- USE COMMON SENSE. Avoid any other activity that increases your risk of bleeding.

**IT IS A MUCH BETTER IDEA TO AVOID BLEEDING RATHER THAN  
HAVING IT AND THEN TRYING TO DEAL WITH IT.**