

Blood Clotting Problem

Anticancer drugs can affect the bone marrow's ability to make platelets, the blood cells that help stop bleeding by making your blood clot. If your blood does not have enough platelets, you may bleed or bruise more easily than usual, even from a minor injury.

Be sure to let your doctor know if you have unexplained bruising, small red spots under the skin, reddish or pinkish urine, or black or bloody bowel movements. Also report any bleeding from your gums or nose. Your doctor will check your platelet count often while you are having chemotherapy. If your platelet count falls too low, the doctor may give you a transfusion to build up the count.

Here are some ways to avoid problems if your platelet count is low:

- Don't take any medicine without first checking with your doctor or nurse. This includes aspirin or aspirin-free pain relievers, including acetaminophen, ibuprofen, and any other medicines you can buy without a prescription. These drugs may affect platelet function.
- Don't drink any alcoholic beverages unless your doctor says it's all right.
- Use a very soft toothbrush to clean your teeth.
- Clean your nose by blowing gently into a soft tissue.
- Take care not to cut or nick yourself when using scissors, needles, knives, or tools.
- Be careful not to burn yourself when ironing or cooking. Use a padded glove when you reach into the oven.
- Avoid contact sports and other activities that might result in injury.