

Low Platelet Count

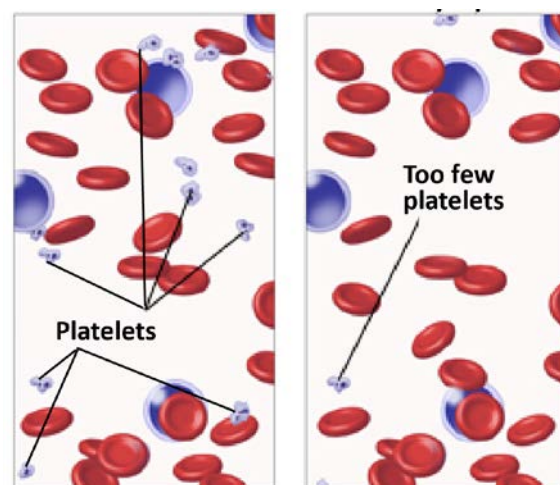
About thrombocytopenia

What are platelets?

Platelets are tiny blood cells. They help your body form blood clots to stop bleeding if you have an injury.

What is thrombocytopenia?

Thrombocytopenia means that you don't have enough platelets in your blood. When your platelets are low, you have a higher risk for bleeding.



Normal blood

Thrombocytopenia

When someone has thrombocytopenia, their blood does not have enough platelets.

What causes thrombocytopenia?

Thrombocytopenia can be caused by some types of cancer, viral infections, chemotherapies, other drugs, and drinking too much alcohol. You are considered to be *thrombocytopenic* if you have fewer than 100,000 platelets in a microliter of blood.

What should I do if I have thrombocytopenia?

- Avoid shaving with a razorblade. It is OK to use an electric razor.
- Avoid taking any medicines without asking your doctor. This includes medicines and herbal supplements you can buy without a prescription. It is *very* important to avoid aspirin and other drugs that contain aspirin.
- Avoid contact sports, heavy lifting, or exercise that makes you work hard.
- Avoid straining to have a bowel movement. Do not use rectal suppositories or enemas.

- Avoid cutting your fingernails. Use a file instead.
- Avoid blowing your nose forcefully.
- Avoid alcohol.
- Use a soft bristle toothbrush.
- Avoid anal sex.
- Women: Do not have sexual intercourse if you have had any vaginal bleeding. Wait at least 2 weeks after any bleeding before having sex.

What should I do if I start bleeding?

- Apply pressure to the site. Hold pressure on the bleeding site for a full 5 minutes. Then check to see if the bleeding has stopped.
- If you have a nosebleed, pinch the bridge of your nose with your thumb and forefinger and sit with your head tilted slightly forward.

Go to the emergency room right away if:

- Bleeding does not stop after you apply pressure for 10 minutes.
- You feel dizzy or lightheaded and are bleeding.
- You have any injury to your head, chest, or belly while your platelet count is low.

Call your doctor or nurse right away if you have:

- Bleeding gums
- Nosebleeds
- Extra heavy menstrual flow
- Brown or red urine
- Black, tarry, or bloody stool
- Large bruises
- Blood in your vomit
- A fall or if you are injured

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

Alvord Brain Tumor Center:
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