

Bleeding Problems



“My nurse said that chemotherapy could make it easier for me to bruise and bleed. He told me what to call him about, such as red, pinpoint spots.”

Talk with your doctor or nurse before you take any medicine, vitamins, or herbs.



Take these steps:

Protect yourself.

- Use an electric shaver, not a razor.
- Be careful when using scissors, knives, or other sharp objects.
- Wear shoes all the time, to protect your feet.
- Blow your nose gently.
- Brush your teeth with a very soft toothbrush.
- Tell your doctor or nurse if you have hard bowel movements or feel constipated.

Don't do things that could make it easier to bleed.

- **Don't** use dental floss or toothpicks.
- **Don't** pick at pimples or scabs.
- **Don't** play rough sports.
- **Don't** put anything in your rectum, not even a thermometer or medicine.
- **Don't** use tampons. Use pads.

If you start to bleed:

Press down firmly on the area with a clean cloth. Keep pressing until the bleeding stops.

If you bruise:

Put ice on the area for about 20 minutes.

Call your doctor or nurse if you have any of these changes:

Skin changes

- Bruises
- Tiny, red, pinpoint spots on your skin

Head or vision changes

- Bad headaches
- Changes in how well you see
- Feeling confused or very sleepy

Bleeding

- Bleeding that doesn't stop after a few minutes
- Bleeding from your mouth or nose
- Bleeding from your vagina when you are not having your period (menstruation)
- Bleeding during your period that is heavier or lasts longer than normal

Changes when you go to the bathroom

- Blood in your urine. The urine will have a red or pink color to it.
- Black or bloody stools

Questions to ask your doctor or nurse:

1. What problems should I call you about?
2. How long should I wait for the bleeding to stop before I call you or go to the emergency room?
3. Is it okay to drink beer, wine, or other drinks with alcohol?
 Yes
 No, don't have any drinks with alcohol.
Other comments: _____

4. Is it okay to have sex?

- Yes
 No

Other comments: _____

5. Can I take medicine, vitamins, herbs, or supplements?

- Yes, it is okay to take: _____
- No, always call to check before you take anything.
- No, you should not take: _____

6. What should I do if I bruise?

FREE SERVICES TO LEARN MORE

National Cancer Institute Cancer Information Service

Phone: 1-800-4-CANCER (1-800-422-6237)
TTY: 1-800-332-8615
Online: www.cancer.gov
Chat Online: www.cancer.gov/help



NIH Publication No. 10-6465
Reprinted April 2010

