Low Platelet Precautions (Thrombocytopenia Precautions)
Patient Education

Platelets are cells in your blood that help stop bleeding. After receiving chemotherapy your platelet count may drop. With a low platelet count, you are at risk of bleeding. The normal platelet count is 150,000 to 400,000. If your platelets are above 50,000 and you are not having problems with bleeding then no precautions are necessary.

The following tips will help prevent you from bleeding.

- Avoid using a straight/safety razor. Use an electric razor.
- Use a “baby” soft toothbrush when brushing your teeth.
- Avoid using dental floss or toothpicks which could cause bleeding gums.
- Do not take aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid) or any aspirin containing medication. Take Tylenol® as needed for pain.
- Avoid nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medications (Aspirin, Motrin®, Aleve®, etc.). Many cold and flu medications have Tylenol in them.
- Do not drink alcohol.
- Always wear shoes or slippers to protect your feet.
- Avoid sharp objects (cutting, trimming nails).
- Avoid using rectal medications (suppositories, enemas, and rectal temperatures).
- Do not strain with bowel movements.
- Use a water-based lubricant during sexual intercourse (KY Jelly®, Astroglide®).
- Avoid contact sports (soccer, baseball, etc.).
- If you cut yourself, put a clean cloth over the site and apply firm pressure for 5 to 10 minutes. If you develop a nose bleed apply pressure and ice to the bridge of your nose and keep your head tilted forward.
- Women may need to take medication to stop your period.

When your platelet count is low, watch for danger signals of this condition, call your doctor or nurse if:

- A new headache or change in old headache that will not go away.
- Bleeding gums.
- Heavier than usual vaginal bleeding.
- Blood in your urine (red or orange-colored urine).
- Blood in your bowel movements, black stools, or bleeding hemorrhoids.
- Blood with vomiting or coughing up blood.
- Nosebleeds or bleeding that does not stop after applying pressure for 5 to 10 minutes.