# Thrombocytopenia

**What is thrombocytopenia?**
Cancer and cancer therapy can cause thrombocytopenia. Thrombocytopenia is a low number of platelets in the blood. Platelets are the cells that help the blood clot. If you do not have enough platelets, you may bleed anywhere in the body.

- Bruising;
- Bleeding; and
- Rash of tiny, red dots.

**What are the symptoms of thrombocytopenia?**
- Take your medicines exactly as prescribed. Call your physician if you think you are having a problem with your medicine.
- Do not take aspirin or anti-inflammatory medicines such as ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) and naproxen (Aleve) unless your physician says it is okay. They may increase the risk of bleeding.
- Avoid contact sports or activities that could cause you to fall or injure yourself.
- Brush your teeth with a soft toothbrush.
- Use an electric razor to shave.
- Blow your nose gently to prevent a nose bleed.

**What can I do at home to care for myself?**
- Your stools are black and tar-like or have streaks of blood.
- You have any unusual bleeding, such as:
  - Blood spots under the skin,
  - A nosebleed that you cannot stop,
  - Bleeding gums when you brush your teeth,
- Blood in your urine,
- Vaginal bleeding when you are not having your period or heavy bleeding during your period.

• You have severe pain that does not get better.
• Vomiting blood or what looks like coffee grounds.
• Pass maroon or very bloody stools.
• Bleed anywhere and cannot stop it.
• Have signs of a stroke. These may include:
  - Sudden numbness, paralysis, or weakness in your face, arm, or leg, especially on only one side of your body;
  - New problems with walking or balance;
  - Sudden vision changes;
  - Drooling or slurred speech;
  - New problems speaking or understanding simple statements, or feeling confused;
  - A sudden, severe headache that is different from past headaches.

• Need dental clearance before you get any dental work.

If you cannot reach your health care team or your symptoms get worse, go to Urgent Care or the Emergency Department.