

## Thrombocytopenia

### What is a platelet?

A platelet is a kind of blood cell. Platelets help your blood to clot after an injury, like when you scrape your knee. These clots help you stop bleeding.

### What is thrombocytopenia?

Thrombocytopenia (THROM-bo-SI-toe-PEE-nee-uh) is when you have a low number of platelets in the blood.

### How do I know if I have low platelets?

Most people do not know it unless they have bleeding problems. Most of the time, your doctor finds it on a routine blood test.

### What causes it?

Low platelets can be caused by many things, such as viruses, cancer, or some medicines. Your doctor will do tests to figure out why your platelets are low. You may also need to see a doctor who specializes in blood diseases.

### How is thrombocytopenia treated?

Treatment depends on the cause. Some causes are treated easily. Other causes, like cancers, may need chemotherapy or radiation.

Some people have mild thrombocytopenia and do not need treatment. However, they need to have a blood test once in a while to check their platelet count.

### Could I start bleeding at any time?

Most people do not bleed suddenly. Sudden bleeding is rare and usually happens only in people with a very, very low platelet count.

### Will I need a transfusion?

Some people with very low platelets will need a blood transfusion to give them platelets. This may happen to prevent bleeding if your platelets are low and you are going to have surgery. Your doctor will decide if you need a transfusion.

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