Thrombocytopenic Precautions

DEFINITION

Thrombocytopenia (throm-bo-sigh-to-pee'-nee-uh) means a decrease in the number of platelets. Platelets are blood cells that make blood clot. Chemotherapy lowers the number of platelets for a time after treatment.

GOAL

Prevent or minimize chance of bleeding

HOW?

1) Recognize signs and symptoms of low platelets
2) Prevent injury
3) Maintain intact skin
4) Reduce bleeding tendency

RECOGNIZE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF LOW PLATELETS

1) Bruises on skin or in the mouth
2) Petechiae (pih-tee'-key-eye). These look like a tiny red rash on the skin.
3) Bleeding from gums or nose.
4) Blood in urine, stool, or vomit.

PREVENT INJURY

1) Avoid activities that might result in bleeding, such as:
   a) Use of razor blades
   b) Suppositories, enemas, or douches
   c) Gardening or cleaning without gloves
   d) Needle sticks, if at all possible
   e) Contact sports
2) Wear shoes when walking around the house
3) Use a soft tooth brush

DECREASE BLEEDING TENDENCY

1) Hold firm pressure after blood drawing until the bleeding stops
2) Avoid dental work or surgery until OK with your oncologist
3) Avoid medications with aspirin or ibuprofen (they can cause bleeding)
4) Women should report heavy menstrual bleeding