



Winchester
District
Memorial
Hospital

Spring 2019

Winchester District Memorial Hospital Cancer Newsletter



WDMH Cancer Talk

Celebrating Oncology Nursing Day



On April 2nd, we celebrated Oncology Nursing Day with an open house where we shared cancer resources with fellow staff members and visitors.

Shown at the Open House are:

Jackie McMillan, Michelle Renaud, Callie Laurin, and Penny Webster.

(Missing are **Devin Dasey** and **Lorraine Carey**)

Thank you to all of our patients for your good wishes on the WDMH Facebook page:

This crew is amazing. Almost made cancer an enjoyable experience.

One is very lucky when one finds oneself in the care of these dedicated ladies.

I owe a lot to this tribe, they have held me together for several years and we continue to walk arm in arm!

We're so blessed that they take such great care of the patients under their care.

I will never forget you. Much love to you all!

HAPPY SPRING!

Side Effects: Low Platelet Counts

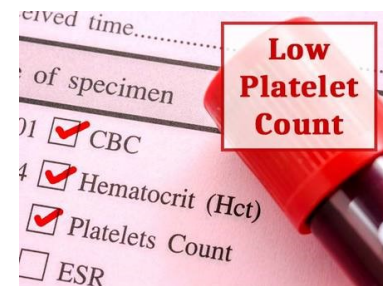
*Many people living with cancer struggle with the physical and emotional effects of their illness and treatment. We are here to help. Please let us know what you are feeling so we can help you manage your symptoms. In this issue of Cancer Talk, we want to focus on **low platelet counts**.*

What are platelets?

There are three main types of cells in your blood: white blood cells, red blood cells and platelets. Platelets help your blood to clot. This helps you stop bleeding if you get cut. When you do not have enough platelets in your blood, you may bruise or bleed easily even from a small cut or injury.

How do I know if my platelets are low?

Your complete blood count (routine blood test) shows the number of platelets in your blood. Your healthcare team will tell you if you have low platelets.



What should I do when my platelet counts are low?

Medications:

- Tell your pharmacist that your platelet count may be low before taking or buying any prescriptions or over-the-counter medication.
- Do not take medications that may increase bleeding risk like ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®) or acetylsalicylic acid (ASA, Aspirin).
- Check with your healthcare team to see if acetaminophen (Tylenol®) is okay to take for headache or occasional aches and pains.
- Talk to your doctor if you take aspirin or blood thinners for other medical problems. Do not stop taking them unless your doctor tells you to.

Mouth Care:

- Use a soft bristle toothbrush, toothettes, or gauze to gently clean your teeth. Stop flossing if your gums bleed and it lasts for more than 2 minutes.
- Check with your healthcare team before you go to the dentist.

Prevent cuts and bruises:

- Take extra care when using sharp knives, scissors, razors and other sharp items.
- Do not strain when you have a bowel movement. Prevent constipation. If you need a laxative, ask your healthcare team to help you choose the right one for you.
- Use a water-based lubricant during sex to reduce the chance of bleeding.
- Use an electric razor to shave instead of a razor blade.
- Do not play contact sports or do any activities that can cause bruising. Ask your healthcare team what activities are safe for you.
- Blow your nose gently. Too much force could start a nosebleed.
- Do not use rectal thermometers, suppositories or enemas.

Eating and drinking:

- Eat well and drink 6-8 glasses of liquids each day unless your healthcare team tells you otherwise.
- Do not drink alcohol. Alcohol can increase your risk of bleeding.

WHAT TO WATCH FOR

If you notice any signs of bleeding, you need to get medical help right away

- Bruising easily or more than normal
- Tiny red or purple dots on your skin that may look like a rash
- Unusual or heavy nosebleeds
- Red or pink coloured urine (pee)
- Black coloured stools (poo) or blood in your stools
- Red or brown coloured mucus when you cough
- Blood in your vomit or vomit that looks like coffee-grounds
- Dizziness, constant headache or changes in your vision
- Bleeding gums, especially when brushing your teeth
- Heavy vaginal bleeding

Even if you do not feel sick, contact your healthcare team or go to Emergency

WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE A SMALL BLEED

Nosebleed:

Tilt your head forward. Press on both sides of your nose with a cold cloth for at least 10 minutes.

Cuts:

Clean the area well with soap and water or a saline (saltwater) rinse. Apply firm pressure with a clean cloth for at least 10 minutes.

Gums or mouth:

Apply gentle pressure on the area or hold ice water in your mouth until the bleeding stops.

Bruises:

Apply pressure or an ice pack for at least 10 minutes.

If the bleeding doesn't stop, go to Emergency



We continue to ask for your feedback through our patient survey. We want to hear your thoughts about the care provided at the Brian Hough Chemotherapy Unit.

If you are able, please take a moment to complete the survey anytime during your treatment. You can leave it in the blue box located at the desk. We will also be including a copy in your discharge package.

And please note that we welcome your comments at any time. Feel free to speak to your health care provider, chemotherapy nurse or myself with any questions or comments you may have.

Thanks for your input!

 Michelle



For the latest details on our programs and events, please check out the Cancer Care Bulletin Board located in the Ambulatory Care waiting room.

Complementary Therapies

Let us know what programs and services would be helpful to you both during and after cancer treatment. If we have enough interest, we can arrange to offer sessions at WDMH - close to home for you and your support persons. **Here are a few examples.**

Good To Know:

- Need **PICC line** covers? Stop by the WDMH Gift Shoppe.
- Interested in a **local support group?** Ask your nurse.
- The **New Horizons Café** is open every day from 7:00 to 1:30 serving breakfast, lunch and snacks.
- **A New Look** The Auxiliary Gift Shoppe has hats for chemo patients. Free hats, made by volunteers, are also available in the Chemo Unit.

EAT WELL, FEEL WELL

'Nutrition During Treatment' classes are held on the 2nd Thursday of each month from 1:30 to 2:30 in Room C1-401. A Registered Dietitian shares tips on what to eat and how to control cancer treatment side effects. Speak to Michelle or your nurse for more details.



YOGA THRIVE

Thank you to Wendy Morris from Earthly Essentials in Embrun for leading this session. Please contact Wendy at her Embrun studio to learn more. Visit www.earthlyessentials.ca or email earthly.33essentials@gmail.com



LOOK GOOD, FEEL BETTER

Take charge of how you look and feel during your cancer journey. Free workshops take place in Ottawa. Speak to Michelle or your nurse for more details.



VICTORIA'S QUILTS

Would you like to order a Victoria's Quilt for someone going through cancer treatments? Call 613-843-9212 or visit www.victoriaquiltscanada.com for details.



NEED SOME HELP?

Cancer Coaching focuses on your physical, informational, emotional and spiritual needs – to help you and your family meet the challenges of cancer, achieve your health and wellness goals and improve your quality of life. This service is available at WDMH through the Ottawa Regional Cancer Foundation at 613-247-3527.



Thank you for reading WDMH CANCER TALK. If you have any questions or comments, please contact Michelle at 613-774-2420 ext. 6798 or mrenaud@wdmh.on.ca