



# General advice for patients with bleeding disorders

Information for patients and parents from the Haemophilia Centre, regarding dentists, surgery, vaccinations, and medicine



## Why do I need regular check-ups at the dentist?

It is important to have regular dental check-ups. This, over the long term, will reduce the need for more invasive procedures such as having to have teeth removed. It is important to take your Bleeding Status Card with you to your appointments and tell your dentist you have a bleeding disorder. Having a routine check-up does not normally require any treatment.



## Can I have a filling, extraction, or other dental procedures at my dentist?

If you need a filling, an extraction, or other invasive procedure such as a root canal treatment, it is likely you will need treatment beforehand to minimise bleeding. This may mean that we will ask you to come for treatment at the Haemophilia Centre before your dental appointment. This will be discussed with you when appointments are being planned.

Whether or not you need treatment will depend on how severe your bleeding disorder is and the type of anaesthetic your dentist will be using. Your dentist may or may not be happy for this to be done in your local dental practice. Whether they would need to refer you either to the hospital or to Canterbury Health Centre will be discussed with you or decided at your check-up.

The Haemophilia Centre can refer you to our specialist dental service at Canterbury Health Centre. They are particularly good at caring for patients who are anxious about dentistry. Just ask your consultant or specialist nurse for more information.

There will be other ways in which the dentist will be able to minimise any bleeding, particularly around the time of extractions. This may include packing and stitching the socket.

## What happens if I have a scheduled surgical procedure?

If you need a scheduled surgical procedure either at your GP surgery or hospital it is important to take your Bleeding Status Card with you and tell the consultant and preassessment nurse that you have a bleeding disorder.

It is essential that you contact the Haemophilia Centre as soon as you are aware of your procedure so that we can put what is called a "Haemostatic Plan" in place. This means planning what we are going to do around the time of your procedure in order to minimize bleeding or bruising.

Generally, your surgeon will write to us for advice, however, **do not assume we will be contacted by your surgical team; we often rely on you letting us know.** Your surgery may be cancelled on the day if a Haemostatic Plan has not been put in place.

## What other matters do I need to consider?

When arranging appointment times for your dentistry or a surgical procedure outside of a main hospital setting, consider how far away your procedure is from the Haemophilia Centre. If we need you to come to the Haemophilia Centre first for some treatment, this will generally be an hour before your procedure so avoid early appointments as the Haemophilia Centre opens at 8.30am.

Procedures carried out in a hospital setting are less of a problem. The Haemophilia Centre is not open at weekends so it would be best, just in case of problems arising or we need to check clotting factor levels, if you avoid weekends if possible.

## What if I need emergency dentistry or surgery?

If you need to have an emergency procedure outside of normal Monday to Friday working hours, make sure you tell staff you have a bleeding disorder. They will be able to contact the on call haemophilia consultant for advice who will then advise what plan needs to be put in place and arrange the necessary treatment.

## What is the Bleeding Status Card?

You will be issued with a Bleeding Status Card. This card will hold information about you or your child's bleeding disorder, the treatment needed, and your baseline factor levels (the level of the clotting factor when we diagnosed the bleeding disorder)

The card will have the details on how to contact the centre in and outside of working hours. **Please carry this card with you at all times**

## Is there any medication I should not take?

- **Do not take Aspirin or non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs**

This is because anti-inflammatory drugs such as Aspirin, Ibuprofen, or Nurofen can increase the risk of bleeding.

- **You should not have intramuscular injections**

Intramuscular injections are avoided because of the risk of bleeding into the muscle. The vast majority of medications can be given as an injection just under the skin, so these would be safer and prevent bleeding into the muscle. If a medicine can only be given as an intramuscular injection then some treatment to minimise the risk of bleeding may be needed.

## Can I still have vaccinations or are there any extra vaccinations I need?

For any vaccinations such as travel or annual flu vaccines we advise that they should be given where possible by subcutaneous injection (just under your skin) rather than directly into your muscle. If a medicine can be given only as an intramuscular injection, then contact the Haemophilia Centre and we will be able to advise you.

You can have all your vaccinations via your GP practice nurse.

For patients with von Willebrand's Disease, Factor XI Deficiency, or some of the rarer bleeding disorders we advise that you are vaccinated against Hepatitis A and B. There is a very small risk of transmitting viruses with any treatment that comes from donated plasma but vaccinations against Hepatitis A and B are available. We will write to your GP to ask them to arrange this with the practice nurse. We advise that this is also given by subcutaneous injection.

## Contacting the Haemophilia Centre

- **Non urgent and routine enquiries** (for any routine enquiries we will aim to respond by the end of the next working day).  
Telephone: 01227 783157  
Email: [ekh-tr.haemophilia@nhs.net](mailto:ekh-tr.haemophilia@nhs.net)
- **Emergency numbers that can be used for urgent clinical issues**
  - Monday to Friday (excluding bank holidays) 8.30am to 5pm  
Telephone: 01227 783166
  - Out of hours emergency contact  
Telephone: 01227 783190 and ask for the consultant on call for haemophilia.

**This leaflet has been produced with and for patients**

If you would like this information in **another language, audio, Braille, Easy Read, or large print** please ask a member of staff.

**Any complaints, comments, concerns, or compliments** please speak to your doctor or nurse, or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01227 783145 or 01227 864314, or email [ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net](mailto:ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net)

**Further patient leaflets** are available via the East Kent Hospitals web site [www.ekhufft.nhs.uk/patientinformation](http://www.ekhufft.nhs.uk/patientinformation)