



Oxford University Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Haemophilia and Thrombosis Centre, Oxford

Early treatment of bleeds

Information for patients



This leaflet has been written to help you treat bleeds more effectively. It tells you what you should do at home immediately after a bleed and in the days afterwards. It also tells you what physiotherapy treatment to expect following your bleed.

How will I recognise a bleed?

Your Haemophilia Team will have told you more about how to recognise a bleed. The general symptoms are pain, heat, tingling or bubbling sensations, together with swelling and difficulty moving the joint or limb.

Why is early treatment important?

Early treatment of a joint or muscle bleed is essential. It minimises the long term damage and potential deformity that can occur as a result of a bleed.

Physiotherapy can help to get your muscle or joint working again and speed up your recovery.

Steps to follow at home

Give yourself a dose of your factor treatment as soon as possible following a bleed.

Please enter this on the HAEMTRACK system (if you are registered) and a member of the physiotherapy team or a specialist nurse will contact you.

If you need advice, or to arrange a physiotherapy appointment, please contact the Haemophilia Centre.

Tel: **01865 225 316**

(8.30am to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday)

Outside of working hours and at the weekend, call the hospital switchboard and ask for the 'Haematology Registrar on-call' for urgent advice.

Tel: **0300 304 7777**

Start to follow the PRICE regime (see the next section). This is a handy way to remember the things you can do to help, both immediately after your bleed and after you have been to the Haemophilia Centre.

PROTECTION

Reduce weight or stress on the affected joint or muscle by using crutches or other supports. You may need to avoid putting weight on the affected side completely for the first 24-48 hours.

REST

The affected area should initially be rested completely. This allows the swelling to go down (which usually happens in around 48 hours) and prevents further bleeding. The injured area should not be forced into any position, but rested in the most comfortable position possible.

ICE

Ice may help to reduce swelling and eases pain. Make an ice pack from a bag of frozen peas or crushed ice wrapped in a cloth. Cold wraps or packs should be applied to the affected area 'little and often', for around 10-15 minutes every two hours. Ice can potentially burn the skin, so please be careful.

COMPRESSION

Due to the increased volume of fluid, the more swollen the injury becomes, the more pain you will feel. Compression reduces this swelling and therefore pain, but not everyone finds compression comfortable. Your physiotherapist can give you an elasticated compression bandage. They will make sure it fits correctly, as additional damage can be caused if the bandage is too tight. Try not to allow wrinkles in the bandage and remove it at night. The physiotherapist may also suggest using special tape to help reduce the swelling and help with pain.

ELEVATION (raising)

This helps to reduce swelling and relieve pain by moving blood flow away from the injured area. The injured area should be raised above the level of your heart. When you elevate your leg, remove the compression stocking to allow normal, healthy circulation. Elevate 'little and often' for around 20 minutes at a time.

What should I do when the bleeding has stopped?

Bleeding usually stops within 24-48 hours. Once it has stopped, it is important to start using your affected joint or muscle again.

Start by gently moving the affected joint or muscle and increase this movement daily. Begin to gently contract (tighten) the muscles in the affected area. If the bleed was in your leg or hip, begin putting a little weight through it, increasing as pain allows. You may need to use crutches or other walking aids, to limit the weight you put through your affect leg.

You may find an elasticated support helps with pain; your physiotherapist can advise you on this.

If you have pins and needles in the affected limb at any time, you must contact the Haemophilia Centre immediately. If this happens outside of hours, go to your nearest Emergency Department.

Severe bleeds into the muscles, particularly into the calf or forearm, can lead to swelling in the muscle, which can reduce the blood supply to nerves and muscles and cause necrosis (the tissue to die).

What physiotherapy will I need?

Your physiotherapist will give you a programme of suitable exercises, which increases in intensity gradually. It is important that you do these exercises as often as you are advised to, to help you recover quickly.

You may be given a series of outpatient appointments, to help get your joint and muscles working normally again.

Who can I contact for more information?

If you need more information about the early treatment of bleeds, please contact the physiotherapists or specialist nurses at the Haemophilia Centre.

Tel: **01865 225 316**

(8.30am to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday)

If you have a specific requirement, need an interpreter, a document in Easy Read, another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01865 221 473** or email **PALS@ouh.nhs.uk**

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charity@ouh.nhs.uk | 01865 743 444 | hospitalcharity.co.uk

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