

HEMOPHILIA

WHAT SCHOOL PERSONNEL SHOULD KNOW



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INTRODUCTION

Teachers and other school personnel may feel anxious about having a student with hemophilia in their school. This booklet is designed to alleviate those fears by presenting facts about hemophilia and provides a quick reference guide on what to do in different situations of bleeding. Educators need to be aware that students with hemophilia do not bleed any faster than other students; however, they may have prolonged or delayed bleeding.


This booklet uses the terms “he,” “him” and “his” throughout the text as most people with hemophilia are males. This does not deny that many girls may have bleeding disorders.

COMMON BLEEDS

MOUTH BLEEDS Bleeding in the mouth may be troublesome as it is messy, but it is usually minor. Blood mixed with saliva sometimes makes the bleeding look worse than it is. Encourage the student to spit out rather than swallowing blood to avoid an upset stomach.

IF A STUDENT HAS OOZING FROM A CUT IN THE MOUTH, WE RECOMMEND YOU:

- Put on protective gloves.
- Apply **firm continuous pressure** to the site of bleeding, if possible with a cold cloth for 20 minutes.
- Encourage popsicles or ice.
- Call the parents/guardian for instructions if bleeding has not stopped after 20 minutes.

A young boy with blonde hair is smiling broadly while climbing a rope structure. He is wearing a grey sweater over a white collared shirt. The background is a clear blue sky. The rope structure consists of several thick, braided ropes held together by red plastic connectors.

NOSE BLEEDS Nose bleeds may vary in students and are usually not serious. A nose bleed is treated the same as for any other student.

IF A STUDENT HAS A NOSE BLEED, WE RECOMMEND YOU:

- Put on protective gloves.
- Position the student sitting with head slightly forward.
- Apply **firm continuous pressure** under the bridge (bone) of the nose with a cold cloth for 20 minutes.
- Encourage popsicles or ice.
- Call the parents/guardian for instructions if bleeding has not stopped after 20–30 minutes.

JOINT AND MUSCLE BLEEDS The beginning of a bleeding episode in a joint and/or muscle may not be readily apparent. The student may be reluctant to use a limb or he may tell you it feels funny or that he thinks that he is having a bleed. If there is bleeding in a joint or muscle, it will gradually swell, feel hot to touch and become painful. The joints that most commonly bleed are ankles, knees and elbows. Muscle bleeds can occur anywhere in the body.

**IF A STUDENT HAS A JOINT OR MUSCLE BLEED,
WE RECOMMEND:**

R.I.C.E.

- R - REST;** Keep the student still to avoid further injury while waiting for the parents/guardian.
- I - Apply ICE;** do not leave longer than 20 minutes and make sure there is a cloth layer between ice and bare skin.
- C - COMPRESSION;** wrap limb with elastic bandage.
- E - ELEVATE** the body part.

SUPERFICIAL BRUISING Students with hemophilia often have bruises on their extremities. These usually are superficial and generally are no cause for alarm. Notice must be paid to the student who expresses ongoing pain at the bruised site.

LACERATIONS If bleeding occurs from a cut, scrape or laceration, the first aid treatment is the same as with any other student.

IF A STUDENT WITH HEMOPHILIA SUSTAINS A CUT OR LACERATION, WE RECOMMEND YOU:

- Put on protective gloves.
- Clean cut with a skin antiseptic.
- Apply **firm continuous pressure** until bleeding stops.
- Apply a band-aid or dressing.
- Contact the student's parents/guardian for instructions or seek medical help if bleeding continues for more than 20 – 30 minutes.

LIFE-THREATENING BLEEDS

BLEEDING INTO THE HEAD, NECK, CHEST OR ABDOMEN MAY BE LIFE-THREATENING AND REQUIRES IMMEDIATE MEDICAL ATTENTION.

In the absence of symptoms, notify the student's parents/guardian as symptoms may appear later.

HEAD INJURY All head injuries are to be considered serious because of the risk of a brain hemorrhage.

Symptoms of a brain hemorrhage are:

- Loss of consciousness
- Drowsiness
- Dizziness
- Irritability
- Lethargy
- Nausea and/or vomiting
- Dilated or unequal pupils
- Headache
- Confusion
- Unsteady gait

**IF THE STUDENT SUFFERS A HEAD INJURY,
WE RECOMMEND YOU:**

- **SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL ATTENTION.**
- Notify the student's parents/guardian immediately.

NECK INJURY OR BLEEDS Neck bleeding is a serious bleed because of the potential of blocking the airway. Any injury to the area as well as the student's expression of pain and tenderness should be attended to promptly. Failure to do so could result in the student having difficulty in swallowing or breathing.

IF A STUDENT IS SUSPECTED OF HAVING A NECK BLEED, WE RECOMMEND YOU:

- **SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL ATTENTION.**
- Notify the student's parents/guardian immediately.

CHEST INJURY OR BLEED Injuries to the chest wall may be very painful if there is bleeding into the muscles between the ribs. Bleeding in this area needs prompt medical attention.

IF A STUDENT SUFFERS A BLOW TO THE CHEST AREA, WHETHER THERE ARE ANY SIGNS OF BLEEDING OR NOT, WE RECOMMEND YOU:

- **SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL ATTENTION.**
- Notify the student's parents/guardian immediately.

ABDOMINAL INJURY OR BLEED A blow to the abdomen (e.g., from a ball or foot, or falling onto equipment) is serious because of the potential injury to vital internal organs. Injury can occur without bruising.

**IF A STUDENT SUFFERS A BLOW TO THE ABDOMEN,
WE RECOMMEND YOU:**

- **SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL ATTENTION.**
- Notify the student's parents/guardian immediately.

Please remember that most bleeds are routine. The student will usually inform you when he is experiencing a bleed. Emergencies are **RARE**.



SPORTS AND ACTIVITIES

Regular exercise is very important for students with hemophilia.

Communication between the parents and the physical education teacher will contribute to appropriate activity. Physiotherapists from the hemophilia treatment centre can provide advice and resources if necessary.

A student with hemophilia should be encouraged to partake in physical activities that will keep his muscles and joints strong. Studies have shown that the student whose joints are supported by well-developed muscles is able to better withstand day-to-day trauma.

Participation in sports and recreational activities can enhance the student's self-esteem and can bring him a sense of belonging. It will teach him about teamwork and about fair play.

However, after a student with hemophilia has suffered an injury or a bleed, he should not participate until the injury has completely recovered. This may mean recess indoors and missing gym class.



SUMMARY

1. Students with hemophilia do not bleed faster, they bleed longer.
2. They will not bleed to death from a cut or a scrape.
3. First aid is the same as for any other student. Bleeding from severe injuries can be controlled with proper medical care.
4. Informed and responsive school personnel play a major role in the growth and development of the student with hemophilia. If in doubt, call the parents/guardian or the bleeding disorder treatment centre.
5. The bleeding disorder treatment centre is a good source of information.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This booklet was made possible through an unrestricted educational grant from Bayer HealthCare.

The Atlantic Hemophilia Nurses Group gratefully acknowledges the **Canadian Hemophilia Society** and **Bayer HealthCare** for their continued support and commitment to the Canadian Association of Nurses in Hemophilia Care. We express our gratitude to Aventis Behring and National Hemophilia Foundation for their consent in using certain concepts that were adapted from the publications *Travel Guide* (CANE) and *The Student with Hemophilia: A Resource for the Educator* (NHF).

This project was developed through the efforts, knowledge and expertise of the Atlantic Hemophilia Nurses Group:

Dorine Belliveau, B.Sc.N., Moncton, New Brunswick

Fran Gosse, R.N., Halifax, Nova Scotia

Marilyn Harvey, B.Sc.N., St. John's, Newfoundland

Sue Ann Hawes, R.N., Halifax, Nova Scotia

Carol Mayes, R.N., Saint John, New Brunswick

Lynn Payne, R.N., Halifax, Nova Scotia

We would like to thank all the nurses who reviewed this booklet and gave us feedback.

If you still have questions or concerns after reading this booklet, please call the local bleeding disorder nurse coordinator.

Local Bleeding Disorder Clinic

Tel.

Bleeding Disorder Nurse Coordinator

Tel.

Clinic Director

Tel.

CANADIAN HEMOPHILIA SOCIETY:



1-800-668-2686

OR



chs@hemophilia.ca