



Allied Health

Haemophilia Advice

What to do if you
have a bleed.



Introduction

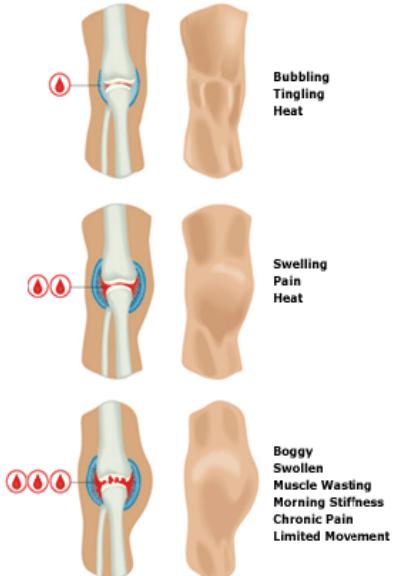
This leaflet is designed to help you treat bleeds more effectively. It tells you what you should do at home immediately following a bleed and in the days afterwards. It also tells you what physiotherapy treatment to expect following your bleed.

How will I recognise a bleed?

Your doctor 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 stiffness.

Remember the faster you treat the bleed the better, but that treatment is not just Factor! You will need help to rehabilitate the muscle or joint once the bleed has stopped.



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What physiotherapy will I need?

Physiotherapy following a bleed is very important.

Your physiotherapist will provide you with a programme of suitable exercises, which will increase gradually. It is important that you do these exercises, as often as you are advised to, to help ensure a speedy recovery.

You may be given a series of outpatient appointments to help to get your joint or muscle working normally. This may involve treatment in our gymnasium and your physiotherapist may use other procedures such as ultrasound (using high frequency sound waves) to speed the recovery of the affected area. These procedures help to stimulate the breakdown and absorption of blood following a bleeding episode.

Who can I contact for more information?

If you would like more information on what to do if you have a bleed,

Please contact the Physiotherapy Practitioner Haemophilia on (09) 367 0000, extension 27025.
or ...

Contact the Haemophilia Centre
at Auckland City Hospital on 09) 367 0000,
extension 25285

Why is treatment important?

Early treatment of a joint or muscle bleed is essential. It minimises the long-term damage and deformity that can occur as a result of a bleeding episode. Physiotherapy appointments are free, and are important to get your muscle or joint working again and speed up your recovery.

Steps to follow at home:

- Administer factor replacement as soon as possible following a bleed.
- Contact the Haemophilia Centre to arrange an appointment with your nurse or Physiotherapist.
- Start to follow the PRICE regime (see over page). 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 Centre. If you do not have the necessary equipment at home, the Centre can supply this.

If you have pins and needles in the affected limb, at any time, you must contact the Haemophilia Centre immediately. This is because severe bleeds into muscles, particularly in the calf or forearm, can lead to swelling in the muscles which can press on the blood supply to nerves and muscles.

The PRICE regime

What should I do when the bleeding has stopped?

Bleeding usually stops within a few hours once factor has been administered. Once it has stopped, it is important that over the next 24-48 hours you start using your affected joint or muscle again. This is to minimise stiffening of the joint and loss of strength.

If the bleeding is in your leg, it is a good idea to keep the weight off it for around 48 hours. It is important to remember that rest is **NOT** the same as immobility and you can start to move the joint, increasing as pain allows.

You may need to use crutches or other walking aids, and it is always better to use crutches than to 'hobble' around on your leg as this can cause further bleeding.

Start slowly, gently moving the affected joint or muscle and increase this movement daily. Begin to gently contract the muscles in the affected area.

Now is the time to start thinking about booking an appointment with your physiotherapist. Your nurse or doctor can refer you for rehabilitation. You may need to organise time off from work or school so that you can attend your appointment.

P	Protection. Reduce weight bearing 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 48 hours, and possibly longer if it is a severe bleed.
R	Rest. The affected area should initially be rested completely. This allows the swelling to go down and prevents further bleeding. The injured area should not be forced into any position, but instead rested in the most comfortable position possible. Remember, too much rest can also be damaging, so start to move the joint gently within one or two days of treatment.
I	Ice. Ice helps to reduce swelling, prevent further bleeding and eases pain. Use a gel cold pack or a 'CryoCuff' if you have one. If not, 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 2 hours or so. Do not apply for more than 20 minutes at a time and do not place ice directly on the skin as it can burn.
C	Compression. Due to the increased volume of fluid, the more swollen an injury becomes, the more pain you will feel. Compression reduces swelling, and therefore pain. Your physiotherapist can provide you with an elasticated bandage and will make sure it fits correctly, as additional damage can be caused where the bandage is too tight. Try not to allow wrinkles in the bandage and remove it at night.
E	Elevation. This helps to reduce swelling and relieve pain by increasing the 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.