

SAMHS INFO BULLETIN

Compiled by Corporate Communication



WORLD HAEMOPHILIA DAY 17 APRIL 2014

Every year on April 17, World Haemophilia Day is marked around the world to increase awareness of haemophilia and other inherited bleeding disorders. This is a critical effort with an ultimate goal of ensuring better diagnosis and access to care for the millions of men, women and children who have a bleeding disorder yet remain without treatment.

In 2014, World Haemophilia Day will focus on encouraging the global bleeding disorders community to **Speak out. Create change**. According to World Federation of Haemophilia this year the focus is to reach out to young members of the community so as to promote their participation and to develop strong leadership.

While there are different kinds of bleeding disorders, of varying severity, most people with bleeding disorders are at risk of bleeding longer than normal as their blood does not clot properly. They may also experience spontaneous, and potentially damaging, bleeding into joints, muscles or other parts of their bodies.

Those with haemophilia do not have enough clotting factor VIII (Haemophilia A) or, less commonly, clotting factor IX (Haemophilia B), in their blood. A person born with haemophilia will usually have it for life and the severity depends on the amount of factor VIII or factor IX in the blood.

What Are the Signs and Symptoms of Haemophilia?

The major signs and symptoms of haemophilia are excessive bleeding and easy bruising.

- **Excessive Bleeding**

The extent of bleeding depends on how severe the haemophilia is. Children who have mild haemophilia may not have signs unless they have excessive bleeding from a dental procedure, an accident, or surgery. Males who have severe haemophilia may bleed heavily after circumcision. Bleeding can occur on the body's surface (external bleeding) or inside the body (internal bleeding).

Signs of external bleeding may include:

- Bleeding in the mouth from a cut or bite or from cutting or losing a tooth

- Nosebleeds for no obvious reason
- Heavy bleeding from a minor cut
- Bleeding from a cut that resumes after stopping for a short time

Signs of internal bleeding may include:

- Blood in the urine (from bleeding in the kidneys or bladder)
- Blood in the stool (from bleeding in the intestines or stomach)
- Large bruises (from bleeding into the large muscles of the body)

Bleeding in the Joints

Bleeding in the knees, elbows, or other joints is another common form of internal bleeding in people who have haemophilia. This bleeding can occur without obvious injury. At first, the bleeding causes tightness in the joint with no real pain or any visible signs of bleeding. The joint then becomes swollen, hot to touch, and painful to bend.

Swelling continues as bleeding continues. Eventually, movement in the joint is temporarily lost. Pain can be severe. Joint bleeding that isn't treated quickly can damage the joint.

Bleeding in the Brain

Internal bleeding in the brain is a very serious complication of haemophilia. It can happen after a simple bump on the head or a more serious injury. The signs and symptoms of bleeding in the brain include:

- Long-lasting, painful headaches or neck pain or stiffness
- Repeated vomiting
- Sleepiness or changes in behaviour
- Sudden weakness or clumsiness of the arms or legs or problems walking
- Double vision
- Convulsions or seizures

Treatment

The main treatment for haemophilia is called **replacement therapy**. Concentrates of clotting factor VIII (for haemophilia A) or clotting factor IX (for haemophilia B) are slowly dripped or injected into a vein. These infusions help replace the clotting factor that's missing or low.

Source: www.wfh.org/whd (World Federation of Haemophilia)

Approved by:

Health Warriors Serving the Brave

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