

# Low Counts

## **Low Red Blood Cell Count**

A decreased number of red blood cells (anemia) can make you feel tired, weak, chilly, dizzy or short of breath. Here are some things you can do to help yourself feel better:

1. Get plenty of rest: conserve your energy. Alternate rest periods with periods of activity.
2. Elevate your head on several pillows if you find you are short of breath.
3. Move slowly to avoid getting dizzy. When you get up in the morning, sit on the side of the bed for awhile before standing. If you find yourself continuing to get dizzy, let your doctor or nurse know.
4. Add more green, leafy vegetables, liver, and red meats to your diet (if you can).
5. Keep warm. Wear an extra sweater or jacket if you fell chilly.

## **Low Platelet Count**

A decreased number of platelets may cause you to bruise or bleed easily. Here are some ways to avoid problems when your platelet count is low:

1. Avoid cuts, scratches, burns, and bruising of the skin. Protect yourself by wearing gloves when gardening or reaching into the oven. Wear shoes or slippers to protect your feet. Be extra careful when using knives or tools. When shaving, use an electric razor instead of a blade.
2. To prevent bleeding and breaks in the skin, avoid constipation, straining, or blowing your nose too hard.
3. When blood is drawn or injections given, apply gentle pressure over the needle site for 3-5 minutes to make sure the site will not bleed or bruise.
4. Don't take any medication (not even aspirin or aspirin-free products) without first checking with your doctor or nurse.
5. Don't drink any alcoholic beverages unless your doctor says it's all right to do so.

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**Remember :**

The effects on your blood counts are TEMPORARY and INDIVIDUALIZED. Your body is working very hard to make new cells and repair tissues every day. To help, eat a well-balanced diet emphasizing high protein and calorie foods: drink 8 to 10 glasses of fluid every day (include jello, soup, ice cream and popsicles); remain as active as possible within your energy level and limits of your disease.