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What is a Bleeding Disorder?¹

Bleeding disorders are a collection of disorders that all include the inability to form a proper blood clot. Symptoms can include extended bleeding after injury, surgery, trauma or menstruation. Sometimes bleeding can occur spontaneously, without a known or identifiable cause. Improper clotting can be caused by platelet issues or missing proteins called clotting factors. Our bodies make 13 different clotting factors – if any of them are missing or defective then the chain of clotting is broken, and a severe, moderate or mild bleeding disorder can result.

Many of these disorders are inherited, but some, like hemophilia, can also be acquired. Others can occur from a variety of medical conditions or even medications.

Symptoms of bleeding disorders include:

- Bleeding into joints, muscles and soft tissues
- Excessive bruising
- Prolonged, heavy menstrual periods
- Unexplained nosebleeds
- Extended bleeding after minor cuts, blood draws, vaccinations, surgery or dental procedures

Learn more and check your symptoms at: <https://betteryouknow.org/>

Treatment of Bleeding Disorders

Treatment of bleeding disorders varies depending on the condition and its severity. For some bleeding disorders, there are clotting factor concentrates that can be infused prophylactically, or on-demand, at home to prevent bleeds. For other bleeding disorders there are topical products, nasal sprays, and fresh frozen plasma, which is administered in a hospital setting.

Clotting factor is a biologic drug derived from donated human plasma or manufactured in a laboratory through genetic recombination technology. There are no generic equivalents. Factor requires specialized storage and handling and is dispensed for home infusion through an HTC 340B program or specialty pharmacies. It is essential that a patient receive the factor therapy that is prescribed by their hematologist; a patient's response and tolerance to a specific factor therapy is unique.

¹ <https://www.hemophilia.org/bleeding-disorders-a-z/overview/what-is-a-bleeding-disorder>

While available treatments have increased the life expectancy and greatly improved the quality of life of people with bleeding disorders, these medications do not come cheap. Clotting factor is prescribed according to body weight, i.e. the heavier or taller you are the more factor you need. The average annual cost of medication for a person with severe hemophilia is approximately \$250,000 - \$300,000. For a patient with an inhibitor, which is an immune response to the replacement factor, the annual cost can be over \$1 million. Hence, health insurance for hemophilia patients is essential.

Hemophilia Treatment Centers (HTC)

Many hemophilia patients receive their care at an HTC. There are about 130 federally designated HTCs in the U.S. – with 9 of these centers in California. HTCs provide comprehensive, integrated, coordinated care via specially trained multi-disciplinary teams that include hematologists, pediatricians, nurses, social workers, physical therapists, orthopedists, and dentists, among others. Access to hemophilia treatment centers is critical for effective diagnosis and treatment of bleeding disorders.

California Statute on Bleeding Disorders

125286.15. The Legislature hereby finds and declares all of the following:

(a) **Hemophilia** is a rare, hereditary, bleeding disorder affecting at least **4,000** persons in California and is a chronic, lifelong, and incurable, but treatable, disease.

(b) **Von Willebrand disease** is a human bleeding disorder caused by a hereditary deficiency or abnormality of the von Willebrand factor in human blood, which is a protein that helps clot blood. Von Willebrand disease is a chronic, lifelong, incurable, but treatable, disease affecting at least **360,000** Californians.

The Hemophilia Council of California

The Hemophilia Council of California's mission is to improve access to care and treatment options in order to advance the quality of life for people with bleeding disorders through advocacy, education, and outreach in collaboration with our founding member organizations – Central California Hemophilia Foundation, the Hemophilia Association of San Diego County, the Hemophilia Foundation of Northern California and the Hemophilia Foundation of Southern California.

Statewide, HCC represents over 404,000 people with bleeding disorders including von Willebrand disease and hemophilia. HCC helps shape state policy by educating members of the State Legislature and State regulators about what it is like to live with a bleeding disorder in an effort to maintain access to treatment, choice in treatment options and improved quality of life. HCC works to maintain funding for programs such as the Genetically Handicapped Persons Program (GHPP), California Children's Services (CCS) and Medi-Cal.