

Anemia and Other Blood Conditions

Your doctor will keep track of your blood work to make sure that you are not developing neutropenia (low white blood cell count), thrombocytopenia (low platelet count), or anemia (low red blood cell count). If you have a heart condition, report any symptoms to your doctor right away. It is also important to follow your doctor's schedule for blood work. Your doctor may need to reduce the drug dosage.

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Neutropenia and Thrombocytopenia

Patients on therapy may experience a decrease in or damage to some of the different kinds of white blood cells or blood platelets. This is what happens in neutropenia, a low number of neutrophils (white blood cells) in the blood, and thrombocytopenia, a decreased number of platelets. These are discovered by blood tests done in the lab work, and may indicate you need a change in your therapy.

- > Be sure to keep appointments for blood tests before treatment and every week at first, then monthly during treatment, or whenever your doctor schedules these tests.
- > Report bruising, nosebleeds, or tiny, round, purplish red spots on your skin to your physician—such effects may mean that your blood counts are lower than normal.
- > If your doctor tells you that your white blood cell count is low, stay away from people who are ill.

Anemia and What to Do About It

- > Anemia is assessed in your blood test—this is part of your scheduled lab work. Your doctor should take a blood test before your therapy starts and repeat it every week at first, then monthly.
- > Symptoms of anemia include fatigue, dizziness, paleness, a tendency to feel cold, and shortness of breath. If you have any of these symptoms, report them to your health care provider immediately.
- > If any symptoms of anemia become worse, for example, if breathing becomes difficult after exercise or exertion, or if you have chest pain, inform your doctor right away.
- > If you have a heart condition be especially careful to tell your doctor about any signs or symptoms of anemia, because anemia may worsen your heart condition.

This information is not intended as a substitute for professional medical advice. Consult your health care provider for individualized information about your therapy. Your health care provider should be your primary source of information about your medical condition and treatment.

