



Guide to Blood Counts

Cancer therapy (including radiation and chemotherapy) not only destroys cancerous cells but can also affect healthy cells in your body. Blood cells are often affected by cancer therapy. This can lead to different problems and symptoms, depending on the function of that blood cell.

Use the blood count chart to follow your blood counts after treatment. This will help you know when extra precautions are necessary. The normal counts mentioned in this article may be different from the guidelines your care team uses.

White blood cells (WBC): These cells are produced in the bone marrow and are a part of the body's immune system, helping to fight infection. A normal WBC count is 4,500-11,000 in adults.

Neutrophil: A type of WBC. It is the most important WBC in fighting infection, so you are at a higher risk of infection when this number is below 1,000. A normal count (sometimes called an Absolute Neutrophil Count, or ANC) is 2,500-7,000. A count below 1,000 is called neutropenia. When this count is low, wash your hands frequently, avoid large crowds of people or those who are sick, and check your temperature at least twice a day. Notify your healthcare team if you have a temperature greater than 100.4° F (38.0° C), a sore throat or cold, or a sore/wound that does not heal.

Hemoglobin: The part of a red blood cell that is responsible for carrying oxygen to the tissues. Normal levels for an adult female are 12-16 and 14-18 for an adult male. Low hemoglobin can make you feel tired. If you notice any difficulty breathing or pain in your chest, you should notify your healthcare team. If your count becomes too low or you experience breathing difficulties or chest pressure, you may receive a blood transfusion.

Platelet: A blood cell that is involved in blood clotting. When this count is below 50,000 you are at higher risk of bleeding. The risk of bleeding increases as the count becomes lower. A normal count is 150,000-450,000 in an adult. When your platelet count is low you should not use a razor (an electric razor is ok), do not participate in any contact sports, or take aspirin or ibuprofen products (these can also increase the risk of bleeding). Let your care team know if you have any bleeding, including nose bleeds or bleeding gums. If your count becomes too low or if you have bleeding, you may receive a platelet transfusion.

Guide to Blood Counts

Use the treatment column to record days you received chemotherapy, biotherapy, or radiation therapy and any types of blood transfusions you may have received.

Date	WBC	Neutrophils	Hemoglobin	Platelets	Treatment

medication that you have been prescribed, you should consult your health care provider.