

Frequently Asked Questions – von Willebrand Disease

Von Willebrand Disease is the most common of all inherited bleeding disorders. A person can have a very mild form of the disease without many bleeding problems or the form of the disease can be more severe and cause more bleeding problems.

What is von Willebrand Factor?

There are a lot of proteins in a person's blood that help form a clot when needed to stop bleeding. One of these proteins is called von Willebrand Factor. Von Willebrand Factor is a glue-like, sticky protein that carries Factor 8 which is another protein in the blood that helps you clot. It also helps platelets stick to the blood vessel wall when needed to "plug" up a hole that is causing bleeding. When there is not enough von Willebrand Factor in the blood or when the von Willebrand Factor does not work well, a person has von Willebrand Disease.

What are the symptoms of von Willebrand Disease?

People with this disease often have more problems with gum bleeding after dental work or frequent nosebleeds. They can also have more bruising than the normal person or have heavy bleeding after surgery, dental work or a cut or other accident. If a woman has the disease, she can often have a heavy bleeding with her menstrual periods.

How is von Willebrand Disease diagnosed?

If the diagnosis of von Willebrand Disease is suspected, a doctor will question that person to see if anyone else in the family has had bleeding problems because it is an inherited disorder. Also some blood samples will be drawn to see how much von Willebrand Factor and Factor 8 are actually in the blood. Sometimes these blood samples need to be repeated to get accurate results.

How is von Willebrand Disease treated?

The philosophical basis for Total Communication (TC) is for a child who is deaf or hard of hearing to use any and all communication methods necessary to facilitate language acquisition. This system, which typically uses signs in English word order, may include: speech, finger spelling, manual signs, gestures, speech reading, cued speech and augmentation of residual hearing (hearing aids). This mode of communication may utilize any combination of the communication options listed above.

Can von Willebrand Disease be cured?

VWD can't be cured, but it can be treated. With the right treatment, people who have VWD can lead normal, active lives