

Telling health workers

Telling health workers - key points

- Bleeding disorders are rare so many health professionals may not have experience with them or know much about them.

If you have bleeding symptoms:

- Always tell your doctor, dentist or surgeon that you have a bleeding disorder before you have any medical, dental or surgical procedures, no matter how minor. Ask them to liaise with your Haemophilia Treatment Centre (HTC)
- Being prepared, knowing about your bleeding disorder and taking information along with you will help you to communicate with these services.

Bleeding disorders are rare and many doctors, nurses, dentists and other health professionals may not have encountered them before in their practice. Understanding the impact of bleeding disorders on females is also quite a new area and your health professionals may not know, for example, that both males and females can have bleeding symptoms with haemophilia. It is important to have some personal strategies to help manage your health care when you are using services outside of the Haemophilia Treatment Centre (HTC).

The following tips give examples of strategies some Australian women with bleeding symptoms have used when communicating with health workers:

- Make sure you know what type of bleeding disorder you have and ask the Haemophilia Treatment Centre (HTC) to organise an ABDR (Australian Bleeding Disorders Registry) patient card for you. Show your other doctors, dentist, and other health care providers your ABDR patient card and ask them to liaise with your HTC.



- Consider wearing a medical alert bracelet or jewellery and having an ICE (In Case of Emergency) number in your mobile phone.
- Always inform your doctor, dentist or surgeon that you have a bleeding disorder before having any medical, dental or surgical procedures, no matter how minor.
- Take copies of information booklets, such as the HFA **The Female Factors** resources, to the appointment to help with the discussion.
- Before you have any procedures, contact your HTC and discuss the medical support you may need to prevent bleeding complications.
- Before you start taking anything prescribed by your doctor, naturopath or other health practitioner check with them whether it is safe for someone with a bleeding disorder.

For more information about working with health care professionals to manage your bleeding disorder, see The Female Factors booklet, **A snapshot of bleeding disorders in women.**