

***Mild von  
Willebrand  
Disorder  
Information  
For Schools***

An Information Kit for Teachers.

2008 Edition



# Mild von Willebrand Disorder Information for Schools

*Published by*

**Haemophilia Foundation Victoria Inc.**

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*Medical Advisors:*

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## About the Royal Children's Hospital Treatment Centre

The Henry Ekert Haemophilia Treatment Centre is a comprehensive treatment centre for haemophilia and other bleeding disorders. The centre provides services such as clinical support, social work, physiotherapy and education advice.

Centre Director is Dr Chris Barnes who has international and local Haemophilia treatment experience. He leads a team of dedicated health professionals:

**Janine Furmedge:** Haemophilia Nurse Coordinator

**Brendan Egan:** Physiotherapist

**Bronwyn Wigg:** Social Worker

**Brooke Harding:** Education Advisor

**Julia Ekert:** Data/Office Manager

Education inquiries should be directed to Janine Furmedge and/or Brooke Harding who can be contacted by calling the Haemophilia Treatment Centre office on 9345 5099.

## HAEMOPHILIA FOUNDATION VICTORIA INC.



February 2008

Dear Educator,

Teachers sometimes worry about having a student with a bleeding disorder. You don't need to panic. There is nothing special you need to do and it is unlikely to impact on your classroom practices. However, it is important to know a few basics, including what to do in the event of an emergency.

This pack is an initiative of HFV and has been compiled in collaboration with the Royal Children's Hospital Haemophilia Treatment Centre to inform teachers about mild von Willebrand Disorder and how it relates to schooling. We suggest you read it now and then put it in a safe place for future reference.

You may also like to make it available to other teachers at your school so they are aware of how to handle an accident involving a student with this condition. Extra copies are available from the Haemophilia Foundation Victoria and on the Haemophilia Foundation Victoria website.

If you have any questions about your student's bleeding disorder, ask the student or their parents/guardians. You can also contact the Haemophilia Treatment Centre at the Royal Children's Hospital on (03) 9345 5099.

You are also welcome to contact the Haemophilia Foundation Victoria on 9555 7595 or email [info@hfv.org.au](mailto:info@hfv.org.au). We are located at 13 Keith Street, Hampton East 3188 and our office hours are usually Monday to Thursday, 8.30am to 4.30pm.

### More information/ resources

Haemophilia Foundation AUSTRALIA [www.haemophilia.org.au](http://www.haemophilia.org.au)  
Haemophilia Foundation VICTORIA [www.hfv.org.au](http://www.hfv.org.au)

Thank you again for taking the time to become familiar with von Willebrand disorder.

### **Committee of Haemophilia Foundation Victoria**

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### About von Willebrand disorder

Von Willebrand disorder is an inherited bleeding tendency. The disorder is named after Erik von Willebrand, the Finnish doctor who first described it. Von Willebrand factor is one of many proteins in the blood that work together to make blood clot. People with von Willebrand disorder have either a lower than normal amount of von Willebrand factor or their von Willebrand factor does not work properly.

### Types of von Willebrand disorder

Von Willebrand disorder is classified into several different types according to the amount or the quality of the person's von Willebrand factor. The disorder ranges from a very mild bleeding tendency to a more severe and rare form that can cause bleeding problems similar to haemophilia. Mild von Willebrand disorder is by far the most common form of the disorder and most people experience **few or no symptoms**. The following information pertains to mild von Willebrand disorder only.

### Symptoms

The majority of people with mild von Willebrand disorder experience few or no symptoms but for those who do, common symptoms include easy bruising and nose bleeds. Females with mild von Willebrand disorder may have heavier periods that last longer than those of other females.

### Treatment

Many people with mild von Willebrand disorder live their lives without ever requiring treatment. However treatment that raises the level of von Willebrand factor may be required when undergoing dental extractions, surgery or after significant trauma.

### The student with mild von Willebrand disorder

Teachers sometimes worry about having a student with mild von Willebrand disorder. There is no need to panic. There is nothing special you need to do and it will not impact on your classroom practices. Students with mild von Willebrand disorder can participate in all class studies, activities and sports.

### Injuries and first aid for students with mild von Willebrand disorder

First aid for both minor and major injuries is the same as for any student.

### Cuts and scratches

All children get cut and scratched on the playground. Children with von Willebrand disorder are no exception. Your student with mild von Willebrand disorder will have as many cuts and scratches as other children his or her age. Treat these minor injuries as you would for any other child. A firmly applied bandaid is usually sufficient to stop the bleeding. If you are concerned about bleeding from a cut or scratch, contact the student's parents or guardians.

### Nose Bleeds

Some people with mild von Willebrand disorder are more prone to nose bleeds.

First aid measures should include:

- Sit the student upright
- Pinch the soft part of the nose, just above the nostrils, firmly together with your finger and thumb (older students can do this themselves). Hold the nose for a period of 10 minutes.
- A cold cloth or cold pack over the forehead or the bridge of the nose sometimes helps. Don't persist if the child does not like this.
- If the nose bleed continues after 10 minutes contact the student's parents or guardians.

### **What about major injuries?**

Major injuries e.g. a significant head injury, broken limbs are rare. General first aid measures are all that you are expected to provide. The student's parents should be contacted promptly and an ambulance called if considered an emergency. The student with mild von Willebrand disorder may require specific treatment for their bleeding tendency when they get to hospital.

### **What constitutes a significant head injury?**

Determining what constitutes a significant head injury can be difficult. A simple knock on the head such as knocking the head on a table is not a concern. Falling from a height and landing with a whiplash effect, eg falling from the monkey bars is a good example of a significant head injury. If you are unsure, contact the student's parents or guardians.

### **What if I am concerned or not sure?**

If in doubt whether an injury is major, contact the parents or guardians promptly for advice. If unavailable, contact the student's medical officer or the Royal Children's Hospital Haemophilia Centre for advice on 9345 5099 during office hours. Out of hours, contact the Royal Children's Hospital switchboard on 9345 5522 and ask for the haematologist on call.

### **Want more information?**

Speak with the student's parents or guardians in the first instance. Contact the Royal Children's Hospital Haemophilia Centre on 9345 5099. Haemophilia Foundation Victoria [www.haemophiliavic.org.au](http://www.haemophiliavic.org.au) Haemophilia Foundation Australia [www.haemophilia.org.au](http://www.haemophilia.org.au)

### **References:**

- Haemophilia Information for Schools. Haemophilia Foundation Victoria
- Understanding von Willebrand disorder, A guide for teachers. Haemophilia Foundation Australia

# Important Information

## About the Student:

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Diagnosis: \_\_\_\_\_

## Parents' (or Guardians') Contact Details:

Home ☎ \_\_\_\_\_

Mother's Work ☎ \_\_\_\_\_

Father's Work ☎ \_\_\_\_\_

Other Emergency Contact \_\_\_\_\_ ☎ \_\_\_\_\_

## Royal Children's Hospital:

Haemophilia Treatment Centre ☎ 9345 5099

Haematologist on call (for out of hours advice) ☎ 9345 5522

Emergency Department Triage Nurse ☎ 9345 6139

Student's Hospital UR Number: \_\_\_\_\_

## Medical Information:

Family Doctor's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ ☎ \_\_\_\_\_

Drug Allergies: \_\_\_\_\_

Normal Treatment: \_\_\_\_\_

Other information: \_\_\_\_\_

**Ambulance** ☎ Dial 000