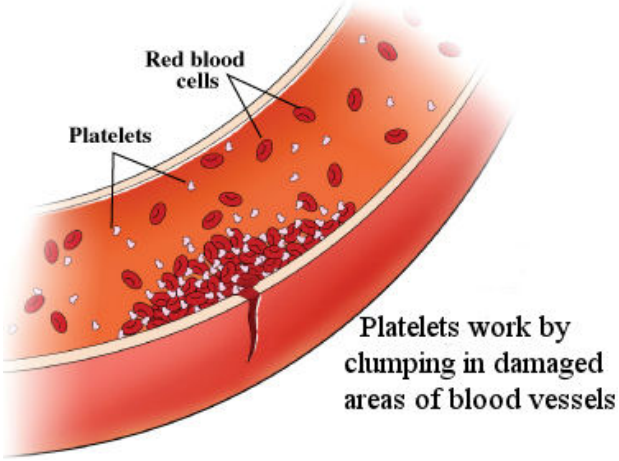
Platelet Inhibition Study

Platelets are a type of blood cell that help the blood to clot. A platelet inhibition study is a test to determine how long it takes the blood to clot. Anti-platelet medications inhibit the ability of platelets to form blood clots. These medications make the blood "slippery" and help "thin" the blood. It is important to know how well the anti-platelet medicine is working. If the blood is too thin, this can increase the risk of bleeding. If the blood is not thin enough, the risk of developing a clot is increased.



WHO NEEDS A PLATELET INHIBITION STUDY?

People who take anti-platelet medication will need a platelet inhibition study. This includes people who:

- Have high risk coronary artery disease and take an anti-platelet medication.
- Have heart stents. A stent helps keep the heart arteries open so they can supply blood to the heart. In time, a stent can get blocked. One way to keep this from happening is to use anti-platelet medication along with the stent. The drug makes it less likely for blood clots to form. Using both medicine and a stent gives the best chance of avoiding a new blockage. That could prevent a heart attack or stroke. There are two types of stents commonly used:
  - Drug Eluting Stents (DES). This kind of stent has a special coating to help prevent scar tissue from growing over the stent. People who have drug eluting stents may need to be on long term anti-platelet therapy.
  - Bare Metal Stents. This kind of stent does not have a special coating. Scar tissue grows over the stent. These types of stents usually do not need anti-platelet medication.

TESTING

- The platelet inhibition study consists of drawing blood.
  - The test will show how how long it takes for your platelets to clot.
  - Based on the test results, your caregiver may need to adjust your anti-platelet medicine.

ANTI-PLATELET MEDICATION

- Anti-platelet medication must be taken exactly as prescribed. Follow your caregiver's instructions regarding how much to take and when to take it.
  - A platelet inhibition study might change the amount of anti-platelet medication you take.
  - Frequent testing may be needed while you are taking anti-platelet medication.
  - Keep a log of the medication. Write down when you take it and how much is taken. This will help keep you from making mistakes.
- Do not stop taking anti-platelet medication unless your caregiver tells you to.
  - Stopping this medication can cause a blood clot to form. That could lead to a heart attack or stroke.
  - Patients who take long-term aspirin or antiplatelet medication should inform their caregiver before any medical procedures are performed. This includes dental work.
- Make sure the caregiver who is in charge of your platelet inhibition study knows about any changes in other medicines that you take. Many other drugs can interfere with anti-platelet medicines. They include:
  - Proton Pump Inhibitors such as Omperazole. This can affect the anti-platelet activity of some medications such as Plavix.
  - Over-the-counter pain relievers such as Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDS).
  - Other blood thinners.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You have stomach pain, headache or nausea that does not go away.
- Develop a rash or hives (red bumps on the skin that itch, sting or burn).
- Begin to bruise easily.
- You have a cut that bleeds longer than normal.
- Feel unusually weak, tired or lightheaded.
- You develop a fever of more than 100.5° F (38.1° C).

SEEK IMMEDIDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You have a nose bleed or any other bleeding that does not stop.
- You cough up or vomit blood or anything that looks like coffee grounds.
- A bowel movement that looks bloody, black or tar-like.
- You have chest pain.
- Breathing becomes difficult.
- A severe headache comes on suddenly.
- You become confused or have trouble seeing, talking or keeping your balance.
- Weakness or numbness (no feeling) suddenly develops.
- Your mouth or throat swells. This can make breathing or swallowing difficult.
- You develop a fever of more than 102° F (38.9° C).

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch your condition.
- Will get help right away if you are not doing well or get worse.

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