

# What to Do: Blood in Your Stool, Urine, Or Vagina While on a Blood Thinner

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Unexpected bleeding in your stool or urine or from your vagina can be caused by a variety of medical conditions as well as certain medications, including blood thinners. It is important to notify your healthcare provider and anticoagulation management team about any bleeding from these locations.

A trip to the emergency room may not be necessary, unless the bleeding is significant or if you have other unusual symptoms.

## What should I do if I have bleeding from these locations?

1. The first thing to do is determine how serious the bleeding is and if you are having any serious symptoms.
2. Use the information below to help determine if you should seek immediate medical attention **or** if it is only necessary to call your healthcare provider and anticoagulation management team.

(For information on symptoms and who to call for urinary and vaginal bleeding see page 2.)

## Rectal bleeding (blood in stool):

Get **immediate medical attention** if you have:

- black, tarry stools or maroon colored stools
- bright red blood in the toilet water

Call healthcare providers and anticoagulation management team if you have:

- small amount of blood on toilet paper

- no other unusual symptoms

### **How can I prevent rectal bleeding?**

One of the most common causes of blood in the stool is constipation and hemorrhoids. Here are some suggestions to help prevent constipation and hemorrhoids:

- Eat a healthy, high-fiber diet and drink plenty of water
- Do not strain when having a bowel movement. Ask your doctor about a stool softener or a laxative that is safe to use
- Do not use harsh enemas, suppositories or any harsh laxatives that could cause rectal bleeding
- Try to get regular exercise

### **Urinary bleeding (blood in urine):**

Get **immediate medical attention** if you have:

- urine with extensive blood clots
- urine that is red and thicker like ketchup
- difficulty urinating
- severe pain

Call healthcare providers and anticoagulation management team if you have:

- light pink or brownish colored urine without extensive blood clots
- no other unusual symptoms such as difficulty urinating or pain

### **Vaginal bleeding:**

Get **immediate medical attention** if you have:

- Bleeding enough to soak a pad or more an hour for more than 2 hours

Call healthcare providers and anticoagulation management team if you have:

- periods that are a little heavier or last a little longer than usual

- no other unusual symptoms

**Regardless of how severe the bleeding is, you must do the following:**

1. Get **immediate medical attention** if you have dizziness, light-headedness, shortness of breath, fatigue or any other unusual symptom.
2. Call your healthcare provider and anticoagulation management team. You may need to have your INR tested, and further testing may be needed to determine the cause of the bleed.

Information on when to seek immediate medical attention based on recommendations from Michigan Medicine departments of Gastroenterology, Urology, and Obstetrics and Gynecology physicians.

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