

# Taking Care of Blood in Your Stool, Urine, or Vagina: For People Taking Blood Thinners

Unexpected bleeding in your stool (poop), urine (pee), or from your vagina can be caused by many different medical conditions or medications, including blood thinners. It is important to tell your healthcare provider and anticoagulation management team about any bleeding you have from these locations. You may not need to go to the emergency room, unless the bleeding is serious or if you have other unusual symptoms.

## What should I do if I have bleeding in any of these areas?

The first thing to do is figure out how serious the bleeding is, and if you are having any serious symptoms. Use the information below to help you decide if you need to get medical help immediately or if you should call your healthcare provider and anticoagulation management team.

<b>Rectal bleeding (blood in your stool):</b>	
<b>Go to the nearest emergency room (ER) if you have:</b>	<b>Call your healthcare provider and the Anticoagulation Clinic if you have:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Black, tar-like stools or maroon-colored stools</li> <li>• Bright red blood in the toilet water</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A small amount of blood on your toilet paper</li> <li>• No other unusual symptoms</li> </ul>

<b>Urinary bleeding (blood in your urine):</b>	
<b>Go to the nearest emergency room (ER) if you have:</b>	<b>Call your healthcare provider and the Anticoagulation Clinic if you have:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Urine with lots of blood clots</li> <li>• Urine that is red and thicker (like ketchup)</li> <li>• Difficulty urinating (peeing)</li> <li>• Severe pain</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Light pink or brown urine without a lot of blood clots</li> <li>• No other unusual symptoms (such as difficulty urinating or pain)</li> </ul>

<b>Vaginal bleeding:</b>	
<b>Go to the nearest emergency room (ER) if you have:</b>	<b>Call your healthcare provider and the Anticoagulation Clinic if you have:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bleeding so much that you soak a pad or more an hour for more than 2 hours</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Periods that are a little heavier, or that last a little longer than usual</li> <li>• No other unusual symptoms</li> <li>• New bleeding for post-menopausal women</li> </ul>

No matter how bad your bleeding is in these areas, you should:

- Get **immediate medical help (call 911 or have someone drive you to the ER)** if you have dizziness, light-headedness, shortness of breath, fatigue (extreme tiredness) or any other unusual symptoms.
- Call your healthcare provider and anticoagulation management team. You may need to have your **international normalized ratio (INR)** tested, which is a measurement of how quickly your blood clots. You may also need more testing to figure out the cause of the bleeding.

## How can I prevent rectal bleeding (blood in my stool)?

One of the most common causes of blood in the stool are **constipation** (having hard bowel movements, or not being able to have a bowel movement) and **hemorrhoids** (swollen veins in your rectum or anus). 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 for you to use.
- Do not use any enemas, suppositories, or harsh laxatives that could cause rectal bleeding.
- Try to get regular exercise.

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