



What is Von Willebrand Disease (VWD)?

1600 7th Ave S • Birmingham, AL 35233 • 205.638.9285 • Hematology/Oncology

VWD is a disorder that is caused by a problem with one of the proteins in the blood (von Willebrand factor/VWF). People with VWD either don't have enough VWF or it doesn't work properly.

What is Von Willebrand Factor (VWF)?

- It is important for blood clotting.
- It makes platelets stick to the wall of an injured blood vessel and to each other.
- Without VWF, a platelet plug (clot) cannot be made.
- It is also called a carrier protein because it carries one of the clotting factors, factor VIII (8), with it.
- It helps make sure there is enough factor VIII (8) in the blood and that it gets to where it is needed.
- Without VWF, factor VIII (8) will be broken down in the bloodstream and there may not be enough of it to stop bleeding.

What are the types of Von Willebrand Disease?

It is important for a person to know which type he or she has.

Type 1 von Willebrand Disease

- Most common type.
- About 85% of the people with VWD have this type.
- The VWF works correctly but there is not enough of it in the bloodstream.

Type 2 von Willebrand Disease

- The second most common type.
- About 15% of people with VWD have Type 2.
- Usually have more severe bleeding problems than people with Type 1.
- There is enough von Willebrand factor but it does not work right.
- There are 4 subtypes of Type 2 VWD.

Type 3 von Willebrand Disease

- Type 3 is the rarest type of VWD.
- About one person in a million has this type.
- Has the most severe symptoms.
- People with Type 3 VWD have little or no VWF in their blood.
- They can have bleeding into their joints and muscles without even knowing they have injured themselves.
- Frequent bleeding from the nose and mouth.
- Women with Type 3 VWD have long menstrual periods and very heavy bleeding.
- Because the symptoms are so severe, Type 3 VWD is almost always diagnosed when someone is very young.