

## WHAT IS A HEMORRHAGE?

Hemorrhage is a medical word for excessive bleeding that is hard to stop. It is a rare complication. Sometimes this kind of bleeding happens inside the body and other times the blood will be visible.

Soon after this kind of bleeding begins, the person often becomes unaware of what's happening. They may be pale, cold or sweaty; their breathing and heartbeat may be fast or uneven; and they may feel very tired or weak. Death may happen within minutes or a few hours. The person will not necessarily feel pain or distress.

If you have been told that this type of bleeding is possible in your situation, there are things you can do to be prepared. This handout outlines what to do when someone is bleeding.

## HOW TO PREPARE?

- Talk to your healthcare team. They will tell you what to expect and give instructions about what to do in your particular situation.
- Medicines may be ordered in advance to help the person feel more sleepy and unaware of what is happening.
- Keep this handout, a basket with dark towels and washcloths and a dark garbage bag nearby. Dark bedding is also helpful to minimize the appearance of blood.
- **Your calm and reassuring presence can make the biggest difference, and is often more important than any medicine or medical intervention.**

**Special instructions from your healthcare team:**

## IF EXCESSIVE BLEEDING HAPPENS CALL VICTORIA HOSPICE 250-370-8715

**Give the person's full name, phone number and address.**

Explain that hemorrhage is happening. Hospice staff will give you information about what to do and ask a healthcare professional to come and help you as soon as possible.

**If you are bleeding and you are alone, stay calm.**

If you can, call Victoria Hospice, unlock your front door and lie down to rest.

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## WHAT TO DO?

- **Call Hospice 250-370-8715.**
- **Stay with the person if you can.**
- Help the person find a comfortable, warm position (often on their side or with head of bed raised).
- Encourage the person to rest or sleep if possible.
- Place dark towels near the source of bleeding to minimize the appearance of blood.
- Give medications as instructed by your care team.
- **Stay calm and reassure the person:** *“...you are safe...help is coming...I am here with you...you are not alone...”*
- Bleeding can be difficult to watch. You may find it calming to regulate your breathing by silently saying to yourself: “Out-2-3-4-5-6” as you breathe out and “In-2-3-4” as you breathe in.

**Victoria Hospice**

**250-370-8715**

**[www.victoriahospice.org](http://www.victoriahospice.org)**

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# What to do if a Hemorrhage Occurs

**Information for  
Patients and Families**



**VICTORIA  
HOSPICE**

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