

# Blood Disorders

According to the Centers for Disease Control, blood diseases are an underrated but widespread health concern, affecting millions of Americans.

## Introduction to Blood Problems

Numerous people are affected by one of several different blood disorders.

These conditions can stem from certain genes, diseases, or environmental factors. Men, women, and people of all racial,

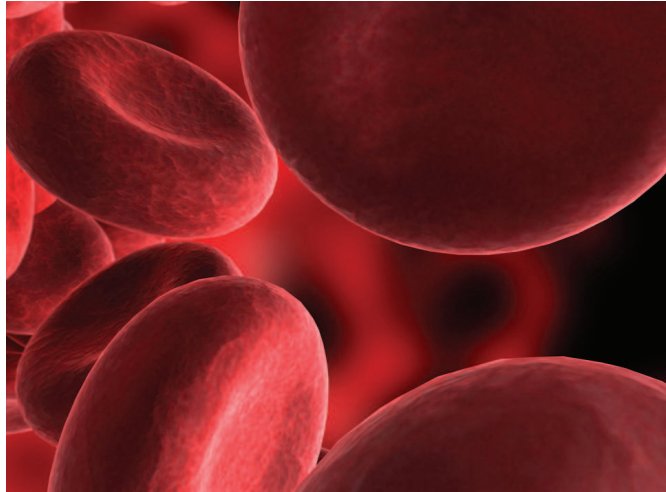
ethnic, and age groups are vulnerable.

## Types of Blood Disorder

The most common blood problem is anemia, which comes in 400 different forms and afflicts millions of Americans. All types of anemia are caused by a low number of healthy and well-functioning red blood cells. People with anemia have low hemoglobin levels, which is the vital protein that carries oxygen throughout the body to ensure good health.

The seriousness of this condition varies from mild to severe depending on the causes. Contributing factors include genetic or biological problems, side-effects from certain medicines, or some forms of cancer.

Many people are unaware that they have anemia, as its symptoms are similar to other health conditions. Signs include paleness, chest pain, dizziness or light-headedness (especially when standing up or active), fatigue or lack of energy, headaches, problems concentrating, and shortness of breath (especially during exercise). Other



symptoms may include constipation, problems thinking, or a tingling sensation. Depending on the origins, treatment includes blood transfusions, special medications, or supplements of iron, vitamin B12, folic acid, and vitamins and minerals.

Another common ailment is sickle-cell disease, a hereditary disorder caused by a genetic trait found in 3 to 4 million Americans. Those who have this trait can often pass on the disease to their children. Blacks are the most heavily affected, followed by Hispanics. While it often leads to anemia and produces similar symptoms, sickle-cell can also lead to stroke, heart and organ failure, ulcers, and more. Like anemia, the severity of this condition and its treatment vary, and include certain medications, a blood transfusion, or the consumption of more fluids.

Deep vein thrombosis (DVT), though not well-known, kills around 60,000 to 100,000 Americans each year, more than breast cancer, car accidents, and HIV combined. A serious kind of blood

clot, its risk factors include serious injury, obesity, increased estrogen levels, old age, and other conditions like heart disease and cancer. Treatment and prevention can be as simple as upping your fluid intake and level of activity, or taking specific medication prescribed by your doctor.

These are just some of the more common kinds of blood disorders. Talk to your doctor and get tested to determine your risk factors. Visit <http://www.cdc.gov/Features/dsBloodDisorders/> for more information.

## HIGHLIGHTS

**The most common blood problem is anemia, which comes in 400 different forms and afflicts millions of Americans. Anemia of any kind is caused by a low number of healthy and well-functioning red blood cells. People with anemia have low hemoglobin levels, which reduces their ability to transport oxygen to the body, leading to several health problems.**

**Deep vein thrombosis (DVT), though not well-known, kills around 60,000 to 100,000 Americans each year, more than breast cancer, car accidents, and HIV combined.**

**Periodic blood tests by your doctor are vital to lowering your risk of most blood disorders.**

For more health topics, visit [www.dadehealth.org/atoz/atoz.asp](http://www.dadehealth.org/atoz/atoz.asp)