

## **Haemophilia**

Haemophilia is an inherited condition that affects one in 5,000 Australian males. Characteristically, the male is more likely to have haemophilia as it is dominated by the sex chromosomes transmitted by unaffected females. It is extremely rare for a girl to have haemophilia.

There are resource nurses within RDNS who are qualified Haemophiliac Resource Nurses. The main objectives for the resource nurses is to provide improved quality of life by educating the family and or child on the condition and safe management of Haemophilia and related treatment. This is done in a safe, happy home environment. This allows flexibility to the family, avoiding reoccurrence of unnecessary hospital admissions/presentations.

A person with haemophilia lacks one essential blood clotting factor – usually Factor VIII or IX – which means they are prone to bleeding. Haemophilia can be mild, moderate or severe, depending on the level of the person's clotting factor deficiency. Mild haemophilia may only cause bleeding after major injury or surgery. Where as severe haemophilia usually causes frequent bleeds either spontaneously or resulting from minor or major trauma. The deficiency in clotting factors is associated with a wide range of bleeding episodes, usually into the joints or muscles.

If bleeding is not quickly stopped with treatment, it will result in pain, swelling and damage to the tissues. Over a period of time, bleeding into joints and muscles causes permanent damage (such as arthritis in the joints) and chronic pain. In children with severe haemophilia, the infusions of replacement clotting factor help prevent them from developing osteo-arthritis, particularly in the hip, knee and ankle joints. Treating bleeds early or prophylactically also leads to less complications later in life i.e. arthritis or deformities of the joints.

To prevent bleeds, children are often given a prophylaxis treatment in the home where they are given the blood clotting agents regularly i.e. two to three times a week, depending on the severity of their haemophilia.

RDNS operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week in Melbourne, parts of regional Victoria, NSW and Auckland, New Zealand and is also supported by a Customer Service Centre.

**For more information please call 1300 33 44 55.**