

Polycythemia Vera

Polycythemia Vera (PV) is a chronic, bone marrow disorder characterized by an increase in red cell mass (erythrocytosis) and hemoglobin/hematocrit concentration. Onset is usually after mid-life. Symptoms include weakness, fatigue, dizziness, ringing in the ear, irritability, pain of extremities, headaches, and itching. Thick blood and increased platelet count can lead to clotting, causing strokes and heart attacks. Other complications include neurological symptoms, hypertension, and splenomegaly (enlargement of the spleen). The diagnosis of PV is considered if the hematocrit is > 52% for males, > 49% for females. Other major criteria are increased RBC mass with an arterial oxygen saturation > 92% and splenomegaly. Treatment of PV improves symptoms and prolongs life by reducing the incidence of clotting and bleeding. Phlebotomy (withdrawing blood from the vein) is the initial treatment and will control PV for some time. Radioactive phosphorus and alkylating agents (chemotherapy) have been used; however, this form of treatment can lead to leukemia. Hydroxyurea or recombinant interferon is used to lower the platelet count or to reduce splenomegaly. Unresponsive massive splenomegaly may require splenectomy. Untreated, 50% of symptomatic patients die within 18 months of diagnosis. Persons treated by phlebotomy alone have a survival of 8 to 15 years. Death is usually due to myelofibrosis (bone marrow failure), leukemia, or clotting.

If your client is known to have a history of Polycythemia Vera, please answer the following:

1. Please list date of diagnosis:

2. Please indicate the type of lymphoma:

Phlebotomy _____ Splenectomy _____

Hydroxyurea _____ Interferon _____

Radioactive Phosphorus _____ Chemotherapy _____

3. What is current therapy? _____

4. Please provide the date and results of the most recent CBC:

Hematocrit (Hct) _____

Hemoglobin (Hb) _____

Platelet Count _____

White Blood Cell (WBC) _____

5. Is your client on any medications?

yes, please give details

6. Has your client smoked cigarettes in the last 5 years ?

yes, please give details

7. Does your client have any other major health problems (ex: cancer, etc.)?

yes, please give details
