



Identifying Aplastic Anemia

Aplastic anemia typically affects people ages 15 to 25 and age 60 and older.

1. Introduction

Aplastic anemia is a rare but serious blood disorder that occurs when your bone marrow cannot produce enough new blood cells and platelets for the body to work normally. This condition leaves people fatigued and increases the risk of serious infections, uncontrolled bleeding, and heart issues.

2. Causes

Aplastic anemia is caused by damage to stem cells inside the bone marrow. This typically occurs when the immune system attacks the stem cells, resulting in reduced blood cell production. Other factors that can injure bone marrow are:

- + Radiation and chemotherapy treatments
- + History of autoimmune diseases
- + A viral infection (Hepatitis, Epstein-Barr, HIV)
- + Pregnancy
- + Inherited gene changes
- + Exposure to toxic chemicals

3. Symptoms

Aplastic anemia symptoms typically develop over a few weeks or months, so changes might not be noticeable right away. Symptoms may include:

- + Frequent viral infections lasting longer than usual
- + Fatigue
- + Bleeding or bruising more easily
- + Shortness of breath
- + Dizziness or headache
- + Fever
- + Pale skin
- + Nosebleeds or bleeding gums
- + Prolonged bleeding from cuts

4. Treatments

Treatment depends on the age of the patient and the severity of the conditions. Severe aplastic anemia, where blood cell counts are extremely low, requires immediate hospitalization. Treatment options can involve:

- + Blood and bone marrow transplants
- + Blood transfusions
- + Preventative antibiotic therapy
- + Immunosuppressants
- + Bone marrow stimulants

Did you know?

Each year, 300 to 900 people in the U.S. receive an aplastic anemia diagnosis.

For more information on aplastic anemia and supportive resources, please visit nhlbi.nih.gov.

References:

<https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/aplastic-anemia>

<https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/16747-aplastic-anemia>

<https://medlineplus.gov/aplasticanemia.html>

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/aplastic-anemia/symptoms-causes/syc-20355015>