What are bleeding disorders?

In people with bleeding disorders, the clotting process does not work properly. As a result, people with bleeding disorders can bleed for longer than normal, and some may experience spontaneous bleeding into joints, muscles, or other parts of their bodies.

Hemophilia is a bleeding disorder that affects approximately 1 in 10,000 people. People with hemophilia do not have enough clotting factor VIII or IX in their blood. As a result, they can bleed for longer than normal.

The most common bleeding disorder is von Willebrand disease (VWD). It is generally less severe than other bleeding disorders. Many people with VWD may not know that they have the disorder because their bleeding symptoms are very mild.

Rare clotting factor deficiencies are bleeding disorders in which one of several clotting factors is missing or not working properly. Less is known about these disorders because they are diagnosed so rarely. In fact, many have only been discovered in the past 40 years.

Finally, inherited platelet disorders are conditions in which platelets do not work the way they should, resulting in a tendency to bleed or bruise.

For additional World Hemophilia Day materials, visit www.wfh.org/whd.