



## von Willebrand's Disease



**Wendy has von Willebrand's.  
She sometimes gets nose bleeds and always has bruises after playing.**

**So what is von Willebrand's?**

Well, everybody needs clotting factors in their blood to help make it clot and to stop you bleeding if you cut or bump yourself. If you've got von Willebrand's it means that you haven't got enough von Willebrand's factor in your blood or what you have got doesn't work properly. Its main job is to help factor 8 do its work of making clots. People with haemophilia A have a shortage of factor 8 in their blood.

**Ok then, so who can get von Willebrand's?**

Well, unlike haemophilia, both boys and girls can have von Willebrand's and it lasts all your life.

**But why do I have von Willebrand's?**

von Willebrand's is in your **genes**, which means that it usually comes from your mum or dad. Although sometimes, children are the very first person in their family to be born with it!

**I see! My friends want to know if they can catch it from me?!**

The trouble is that its proper name is von Willebrand's disease, so people think you can catch it like a cold or chicken pox, but it is something you have to be born with, just like the colour of your eyes or hair.

**OK. But how will I know if I have von Willebrand's?**

Well, if you have von Willebrand's you might get lots of nosebleeds, you might bruise when you bump yourself or you might get lots of bleeding in your mouth.

Some people might not even bleed very much at all, and don't get any of those bleeds. Some people might only have one or two of them, and some people might have all of these, it depends which type of von Willebrand's you have really.

A doctor will have to take some of your blood and send it away for some tests to find out for sure if you have von Willebrand's.

**Is there a cure for von Willebrand's?**

No there isn't a cure, but for a lot of people the treatment works very well.

**Will my von Willebrand's get worse?**

Not really. Things always change as you get older and this might mean a little more or a little less bleeding.

