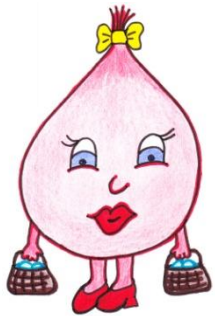


What does your blood look like?

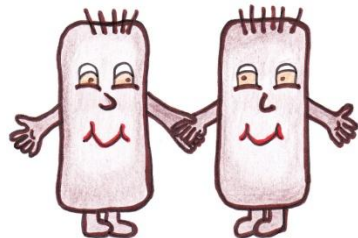
Okay, I know you will say your blood is red, and that's right. But did you know that your blood is made up of different cells? Cells are very, very small, you can't see them.

There are 3 different kinds of cells in your blood, red blood cells, white blood cells and platelets.



Most of the cells in your blood are red blood cells and they are making your blood look red. Red blood cells are like mommy cells. They love carrying handbags and load it full of oxygen that the rest of your body needs.

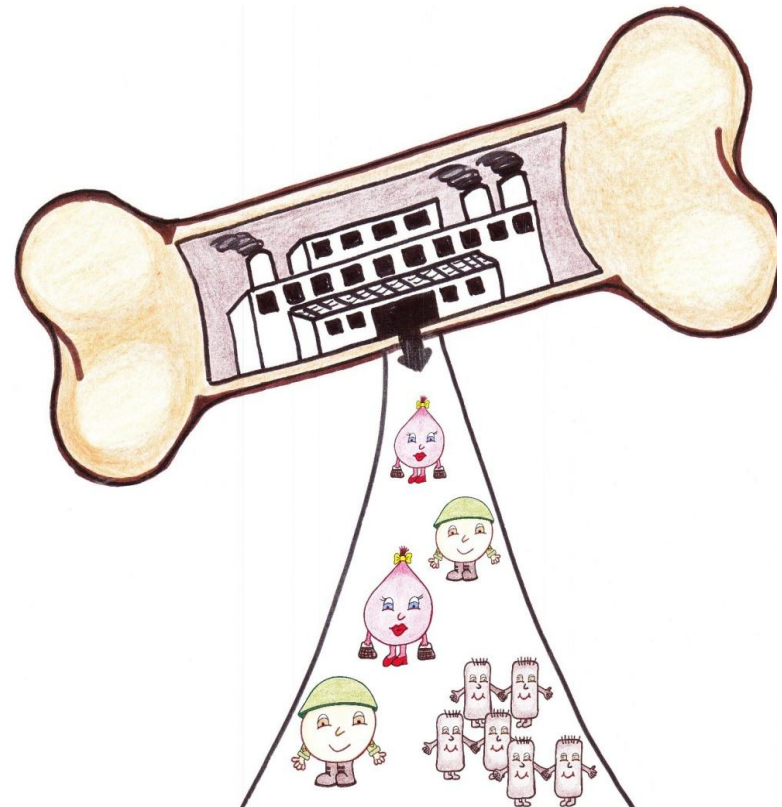
White blood cells are like daddy cells. They are strong and protect your body against the germs that can make you sick.



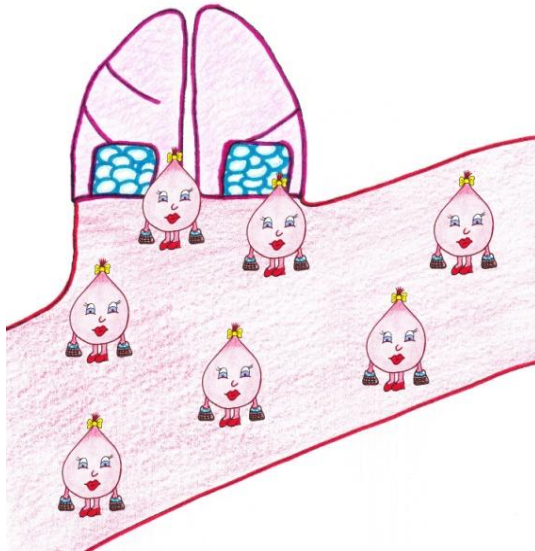
Platelets are like children. They are best friends and always stay together. If you get hurt, they will help your body to heal quickly.

Inside the long bones of your arms and legs, you have bone marrow that acts like a factory. This factory is making the blood cells.

Your body needs a lot of red blood cells, white blood cells and platelets, and your bone marrow is making plenty new cells every day.

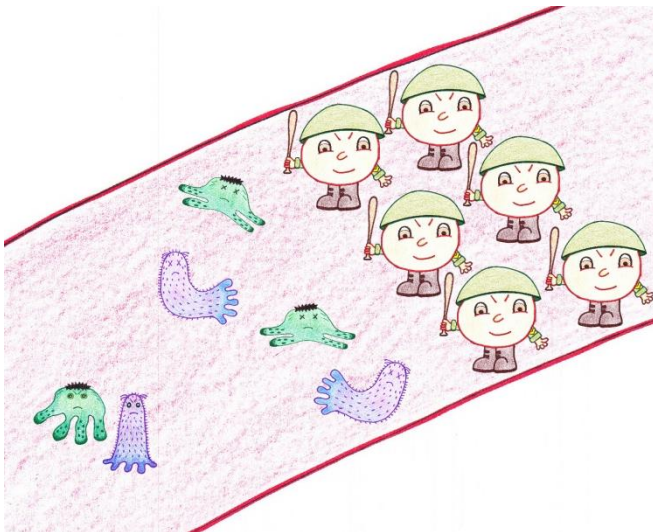


Lets have a look now at exactly what all these cells are suppose to do in your body.



When you breathe in, you get oxygen in your lungs. Your body needs oxygen to work properly so that you can have energy to play and work. The red blood cells go to your lungs to fetch the oxygen and take it to the rest of your body.

There are germs all around us. Sometimes these germs climb into your body to make you sick. The white blood cells will fight against the germs to keep you from getting sick.

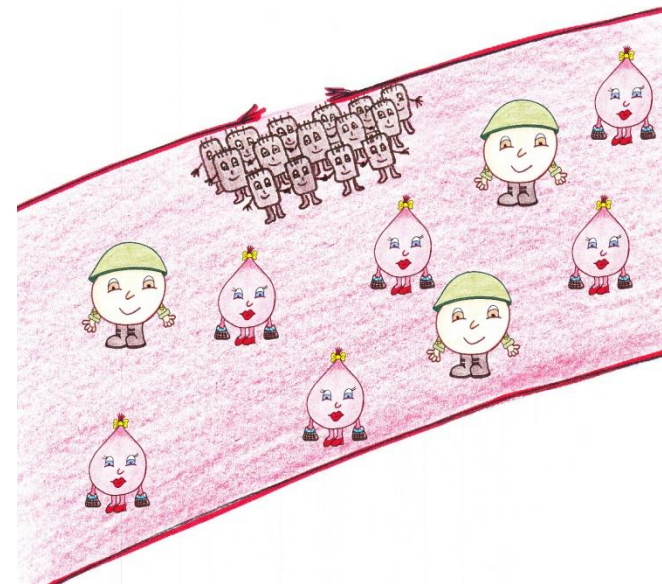


Your blood runs inside small tubes that we call veins. Sometimes you fall and hurt yourself or bump against something.

If your skin is broken, you will see some blood on your skin. But the platelets will quickly go to the hurt and fill the gap in your skin to stop the bleeding.



Sometimes your skin is not broken, but you will see a bruise under your skin that is a blue colour. This happens when some of the veins got hurt and you are bleeding under your skin. Again the platelets will go to the hurt and fill the gap in the vein to stop the bleeding under your skin.



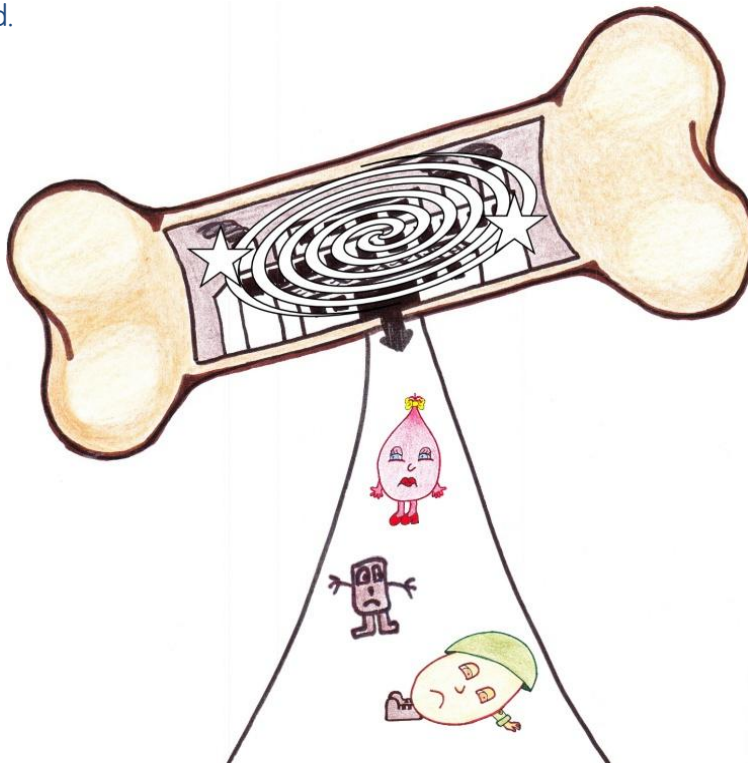
Sometimes the bone marrow can not work the way it should. This can be because your body became sick and the illness is making your bone marrow sick. Remember, it is not because you did anything wrong.

It can also be because you had to use very strong medicine to fight an illness in your body. Unfortunately some medicine, while fighting an illness, can also prevent your bone marrow to work the way it should. You did not cause this to happen. When you stop taking the medicine, the bone marrow will start to work again the way it should work.



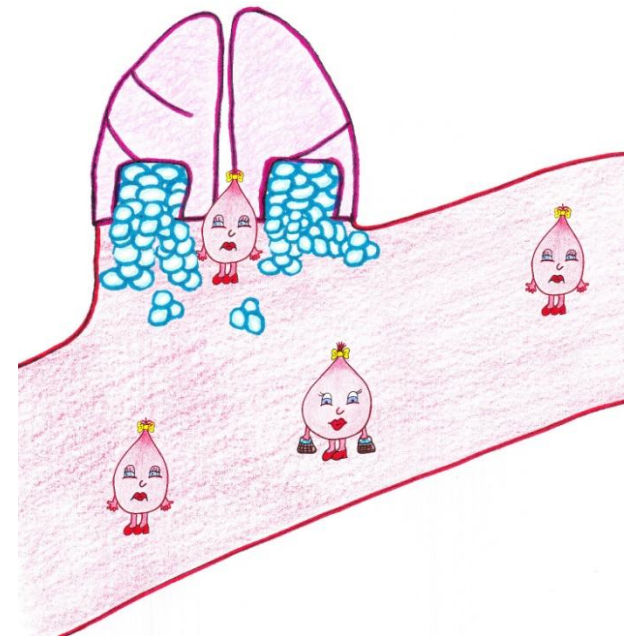
You can ask your doctor or nurse why your bone marrow is sick.

When your bone marrow is not working properly, it cannot make enough cells or it is making sick cells that can not work the way they should.



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If you don't have enough red blood cells or if they are sick and can not carry the oxygen, the rest of your body is not getting enough oxygen. Your body needs oxygen to work and if there is less oxygen in your arms and legs, you will feel very tired.

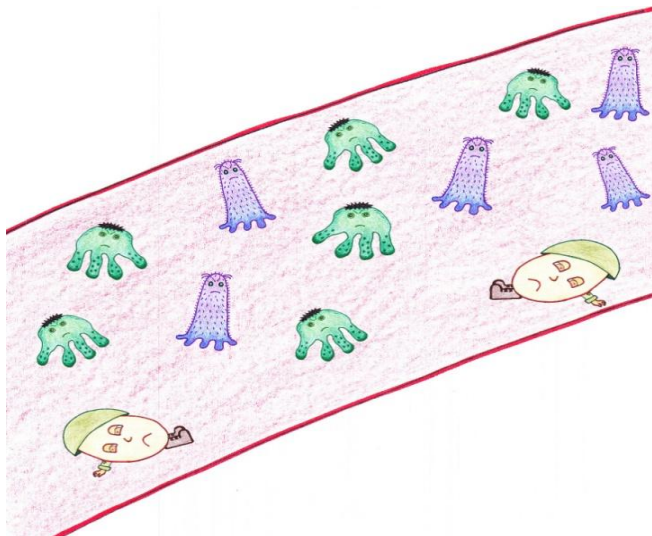


Your heart might also have to work harder to pump more blood so that the few red blood cells carrying oxygen can get to the rest of the body much faster. This will also makes you feel tired.



The best will be for you to rest so that your body don't have to work so hard.

If your white blood cells are not working the way they should, they will not be able to fight against the germs and you might get sick very easily.



If this is the case, you will have to remember a few things:



Eat a healthy diet



Don't eat from the same plate or with the same spoon as your friend



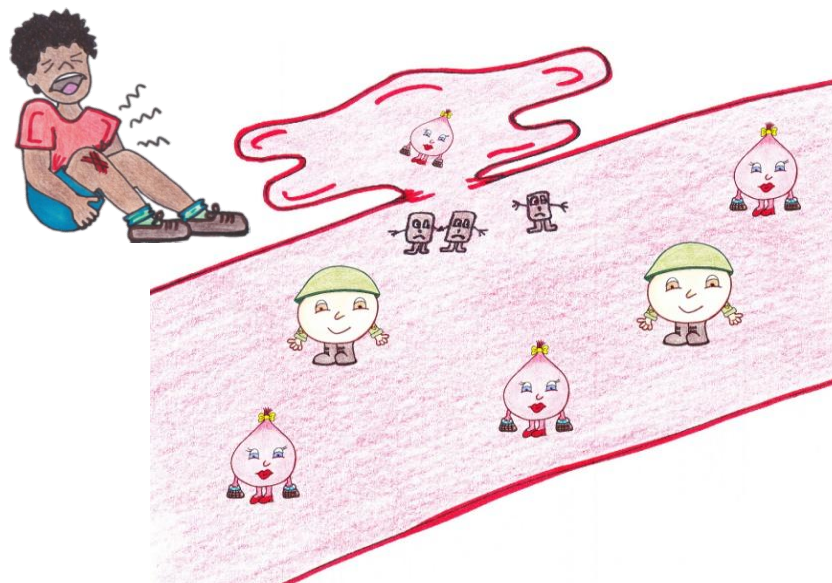
Wash your hands often with soap and water



Don't visit friends when they are sick



Wash all fruit and vegetables before eating them



If you do not have enough platelets, it can take a bit longer for the bleeding to stop when you hurt yourself. You might also see more bruises on your body.

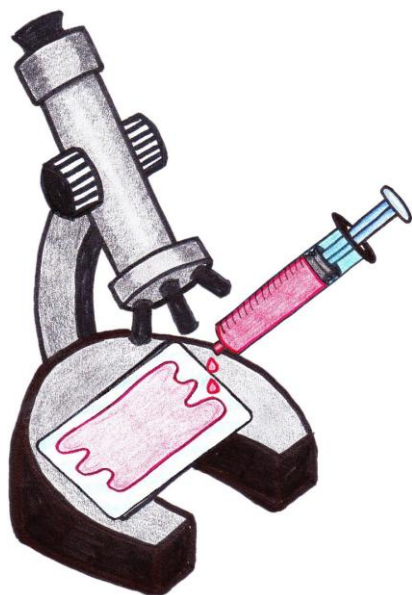
If you don't have enough platelets, you will have to play safe. You can show this booklet to your friends and tell them why you have to take extra good care of your body.

If you have very few platelets, it may be best if you play inside the house and rather watch television instead of going outdoors.



Did you know that your doctor can tell how many red blood cells, white blood cells and platelets are there in your body by looking at your blood through a microscope?

The microscope make the cells super big so that the doctor can see the blood cells to count them.

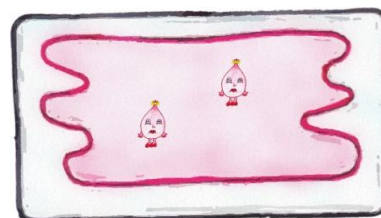


You doctor or nurse will take some blood from your arm with a syringe. Then they will send it to a laboratory where the people there will put a little drop of the blood under the microscope to count the blood cells in the drop of blood.

(A laboratory is a place where they do all sorts of tests on blood)

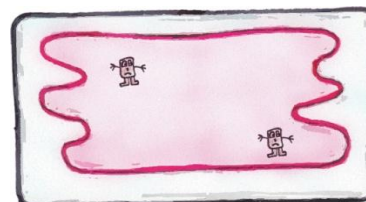
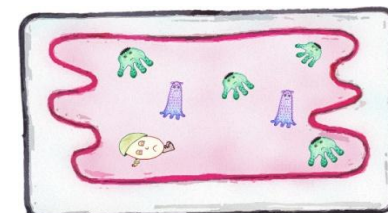
This is what they will see:

Healthy blood



Not enough or sick red blood cells

Not enough or sick white blood cells. They can also see if there are some germs in your blood.



Not enough platelets

Now you know what your blood really looks like. You can use this book to tell other people about your illness.

Remember, if you still have some questions, ask your doctor or nurse to explain it to you. They are there to help you.