

# HEALTH NEWS

## Why You Should Talk To Your Healthcare Provider

(NAPSA)—Discussing symptoms with your healthcare provider—even those that seem inconsequential or may make you uncomfortable—is key to receiving an accurate diagnosis. For women with von Willebrand disease (VWD), a common yet underdiagnosed bleeding disorder caused by a missing or ineffective protein in the blood necessary for clotting, honest and open communication with their healthcare provider is especially important.

To help bring attention to the need for better communication between women and their healthcare providers, the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners® (AANP) has conducted a survey, as part of its VWD Young Women’s Education Campaign.

Survey results show that close to 40 percent of women have experienced one or more of the potential symptoms of VWD, but nearly half of them have not discussed these symptoms with a healthcare provider. Of those patients who did discuss their symptoms, the majority did not recall being informed that those symptoms could indicate a bleeding disorder.

The five signs and symptoms of VWD are easy bruising; frequent or prolonged nosebleeds; heavy, prolonged menstruation; prolonged bleeding following injury, childbirth or surgery; and prolonged bleeding during dental procedures.

“VWD symptoms may be something many women do not feel comfortable discussing, but open communication can lead to an accurate diagnosis and ultimately a treatment plan that can help you manage your condition,” said Josie Weiss, Ph.D., FNP-BC, associate professor, Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing at Florida Atlantic University and fellow of the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners. “These findings underscore the need for more meaningful discussions



**A recent survey showed that 40 percent of women experience potential symptoms of von Willebrand disease but don’t tell their healthcare providers.**

about VWD and its symptoms between healthcare providers and patients.”

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that more than 1 percent of the U.S. population has VWD. Roberta Smith, along with several members of her family, is among the approximately 3 million people living with this common genetic disorder.

“After dealing with health conditions over the years that were caused by VWD, it is such a relief to have a proper diagnosis and be receiving appropriate treatment,” said Roberta. “I no longer live in fear of bleeding events.”

While VWD affects both men and women equally, it takes women almost 16 years to receive a diagnosis. Women who are undiagnosed are at a greater risk for serious complications such as miscarriages, life-threatening bleeding following childbirth, and painful, unnecessary hysterectomies.

### More Information

To learn more about VWD, visit [www.AANP.org](http://www.AANP.org) or [www.allaboutbleeding-US.com](http://www.allaboutbleeding-US.com).

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