



PNH Glossary of Terms

Version 1.1

AA	Aplastic Anemia
Absolute neutrophil count	A measure of the actual number of neutrophils present in the blood per unit volume
Alendronate	A compound that alters the cycle of bone formation and breakdown in your body. Increases new bone formation
Allergen	A substance that causes an allergic reaction
ALT	Test used to determine if there is liver damage. ALT is an enzyme involved in the metabolism of the amino acid alanine. It is in a number of tissues but is in highest concentrations in the liver
Anemia	The state of having too few red blood cells
Antibodies	Immunoglobulins (serum proteins) produced by the body in response to specific antigens (usually a foreign protein)
Anticoagulant	A drug capable of reducing the capacity of the blood to clot (causes “thinning of the blood”)
Anticoagulation	Reduction by medication of the capacity of the blood to clot
Antigen	A body substance, usually a protein that can stimulate an immune reaction
Antithymocyte globulin (ATG)	An extract of the serum of horses that have been immunized against certain human cells; used in the treatment of aplastic anemia
Aplastic	Involving the absence or defective development of a tissue or organ
Aplastic anemia	A disease characterized by the absence from the bone marrow of cells that make blood cells
Band	A young neutrophil
Bilirubin	A yellow breakdown product of hemoglobin that is processed by the liver; when the amount in the blood is high, as is the case when a great deal of hemolysis is taking place, the whites of the eyes appear yellow
Blast cells	Immature cells that mature into various blood cells
Bone marrow	The cells on the inside of many bones; these cells produce the cells that appear in the blood
Catabolize	To break down complex chemical compounds into simpler ones
CBC	Complete blood count
CBC Test	Measures the following: Number of red blood cells: RBCs Number of white blood cells: WBCs Total amount of Hemoglobin in the blood The fraction of the blood composed of RBCs (Hematocrit) The mean corpuscular volume (MCV) – the size of the red blood cells The platelet count is usually included as well



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Complement	The collective name given to a group of proteins in the plasma that, when activated, are able to destroy cells
Coumadin	Warfarin - an anticoagulant (blood thinner). Reduces the formation of blood clots, which is important in the prevention of heart attacks, strokes, and blockage of major veins and arteries.
Cytokines	Hormone-like proteins secreted by many different cell types which regulate cell proliferation and function
Cytopenia	A deficiency of cells in the blood
Cytotoxic	Destructive to cells
Dacliximab	Immunosuppressive medication. Immunosuppressants decrease the actions of your body's immune system. It is used to prevent your body from rejecting a kidney, liver, or heart transplant
Differentiate	To develop into a different (usually more mature) characteristic or function than the original
Eculizumab	Immunosuppressive medication. Immunosuppressants decrease the actions of your body's immune system. It is used to prevent your body from rejecting a kidney, liver, or heart transplant
Enzyme	A protein that acts as a catalyst to induce chemical changes in other substances
Erythrocyte	A mature red blood cell
FAB criteria	Criteria used for classifying leukemia & myelodysplastic syndromes which were developed & agreed upon by a group of French, American & British scientists
Febrile	Feverish; involving an elevated body temperature
Folic acid	A vitamin that is necessary for making red blood cells (as well as all other cells)
Fosomax	Alendronate - a compound that alters the cycle of bone formation and breakdown in your body. Increases new bone formation.
Graft-versus-host disease	A complication of bone marrow transplantation in which the transplanted cells carry on a reaction against the cells of the patients' body
Granulocyte	One of the 3 types of white blood cells so called because they have granules that contain enzymes that help fight infection
Granulocytes	Mature, granular leukocytes (white blood cells); important in fighting infections
GVH	Graph-versus-host – occurs when cells in the transplanted marrow attack the transplant recipient's tissues
Hematocrit	The proportion of the volume of the blood that is taken up by red cells. Normal values (varies w/altitude): Male: 40.7 to 50.3 % Female: 36.1 to 44.3 %
Hematopoiesis	The production of blood cells
Hemochromatosis	An excess of iron deposits in the body, also known as “iron overload”
Hemoglobin	The red pigment in the red blood cells that carries oxygen; the concentration in



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	the blood is used to measure the degree of anemia. Normal values (varies w/altitude): Male: 13.8 to 17.2 gm/dL Female: 12.1 to 15.1 gm/dL
Hemoglobinuria	The appearance of hemoglobin in the urine as a red to brown, purple or even black pigment
Hemolysis, hemolytic	Pertaining to the destruction (usually excessive or premature) of the red blood cells
Hemolytic anemia	Anemia due primarily to the excessive hemolysis or destruction of red blood cells
Heparin	A potent anticoagulant given by injection
HLA markers	A complicated set of cell markers, which differ greatly from person to person. They are used by the immune system to distinguish “self” from “non-self”
Hyperplastic	Involving an increased number of cells
Hypoplastic	Involving a decreased number of cells
Idiopathic	Usually refers to any condition with no known cause
Immunosuppressive	Being capable of inhibiting immune responses
Iron chelator	A substance which binds iron & then eliminates it from the body in the urine and stool
LDH	Lactate dehydrogenase; a test that measures the amount of lactate dehydrogenase (LDH) in serum. Normal (mean) values: 105 to 333 IU/L (IU/L = international units per liter). Higher than normal values indicate hemolysis
Leukemia	A disease characterized by an abnormal increase in the number of leukocytes
Leukocyte	White blood cells, important in defending against infection & clearing the body of harmful material, of which there are several types: granulocytes, monocytes & lymphocytes
Lymph	A clear, transparent filtrate of plasma that is collected from tissues throughout the body & eventually flows to the lymphatic system
Lymphatic system	An important aspect of the body’s immune system, consisting of vessels that carry lymph fluid from tissues throughout the body through lymph nodes to the venous blood circulation
Lymphocyte	One of the 3 types of white blood cells & the primary cell of the immune response, responsible for attacking antigens; divided into two forms, B cells and T cells
Lysis	A process of disintegration or breakdown, particularly of a cell
MCH	Mean corpuscular hemoglobin. Normal value 27 to 31 pg/cell
MCHC	Mean corpuscular hemoglobin concentration. Normal value 32 to 36 gm/dL
MCV	Mean corpuscular volumes – size of the red blood cells. Normal value: 80 to 95 femtoliter



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MDS	Myelodysplastic Syndrome
Mean	Normal
Membrane	The covering or “skin” of a cell
Monocytes	One of the 3 types of white blood cells , normally constituting 3-7% of the blood
Morphology	The study of the structure & form of an organism
Myelodysplasia	A group of disorders characterized by the making of defective cells by the marrow
Neutropenia	A deficiency of neutrophils in the blood
Neutrophil	The most numerous of the white blood cells, important for helping the body fight infections
Orally	By mouth
Oxygen	The gas in the air that is used to make energy. It is carried to various parts of the body by hemoglobin
Pancytopenia	A deficiency of all types of blood cells
Petechiae	Pinpoint hemorrhagic spots in the skin
Plasma	The fluid part of the blood
Platelets	Small cell “fragments of the peripheral blood that are very important in clotting (norm count approx 149k)
PNH	The abbreviation for “paroxysmal nocturnal hemoglobinuria”
Poly	A mature neutrophil
Prednisone	A medication designed to imitate the actions of certain hormones of adrenal gland; it has wide-ranging effects on many cells of the body
Proliferation	Growth by reproduction of similar cells
Proteins	A class of molecules in the plasma or on the red cells; proteins usually have functions to perform
Prothrombin time	A test that is used to measure how thin the blood is
RBCs	Red blood cells: normal values (varies w/altitude): Male: 4.7 to 6.1 million cells/mcL Female: 4.2 to 5.4 million cells/mcL
Reticulocyte	An immature red blood cell
Reticulocyte count	The number of reticulocytes usually expressed as the percent of red blood cells
Septicemia	An infection in which bacteria (not viruses) are present in the blood-stream
Serum	The fluid part of the blood remaining after coagulation (clotting)
Stem-cells	The set of cells that are ancestors to the cells of the blood. They have the ability to reproduce themselves (make more stem cells) & to develop into different cells such as red cells, white cells & platelets
Subcutaneous	Beneath the skin
Synthesis	A building up, putting together, or composition



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Thrombocyte	Platelet
Thrombocytopenia	A deficiency in the number of platelets
Thrombosis	Blood clot
T-lymphocyte	A lymphocyte that is important in the immune response, but which in aplastic anemia suppresses the stem cells; also known as a T cell lymphocyte
Transferrin	A protein that binds iron and regulates iron absorption and transports iron in the body
Vital signs	The temperature, pulse, respiration, and blood pressure
Warfarin	An anticoagulant (blood thinner). Reduces the formation of blood clots, which is important in the prevention of heart attacks, strokes, and blockage of major veins and arteries
WBCs	White blood cells: normal values (varies w/altitude): 4500 to 10,000 cells/mcL

NOTE:

Cells/mcL = cells per microliter

Gm/dL = grams per deciliter

Pg/cell = picograms per cell