

## Purpura

Purpura spots (*3 mm to 1 cm*) are purplish discolorations in the skin produced by small bleeding vessels near the surface of the skin. Purpura may also occur in the mucous membranes (*such as the lining of the mouth*) and in the internal organs. Purpura by itself is only a sign of other underlying causes of bleeding. Purpura may occur with either normal platelet counts (*non-thrombocytopenic purpuras*) or decreased platelet counts (*thrombocytopenic purpuras*). Platelets help maintain the integrity of the capillary lining and are important in the clotting process. **Note:** Large purpura spots (*> 1cm*) are called **ecchymoses**. **Petechia** are pin-point spots that are less than 3 mm.

### Major kinds of purpura:

- **Thrombocytopenic purpura** (*Werlhof's disease*): a bleeding disorder characterized by a deficiency in the number of platelets. This results in multiple bruises, petechiae, and hemorrhage into the tissues
- **Thrombotic thrombocytopenic purpura** (*TTP*): a severe and frequently fatal form characterized by a low platelet count in the blood due to consumption of platelets by thrombosis in the terminal arterioles and capillaries of many organs

### Oral manifestations of thrombocytopenic purpura:

- Severe and profuse **gingival hemorrhage**
- Petechiae occur commonly on the palate

**Important:** Tooth extractions are **contraindicated** due to the tendency for excessive bleeding.