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 (> 1 cm) 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.