

Unlike episodic or “on demand” treatment, which is given at the time of a bleed to make it stop, prophylaxis is given to prevent bleeding before it starts.

There are several types of prophylaxis. Continuous prophylaxis (primary, secondary, and tertiary) is given regularly over a period of several months and often years. Intermittent or periodic prophylaxis is given for shorter periods of time, usually a few weeks or months.

| Type of treatment | Definition |
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| Episodic (“on demand”) treatment | Treatment given at the time of bleeding. |
| Continuous prophylaxis Primary prophylaxis | Regular continuous treatment, started before the second large joint bleed and age of 3 years. |
| Secondary prophylaxis | Regular continuous treatment started after 2 or more large joint bleeds but before the onset of joint disease. |
| Tertiary prophylaxis | Regular continuous treatment started after the onset of joint disease to prevent further damage. |
| Intermittent (“periodic”) prophylaxis | Treatment given to prevent bleeding for short periods of time, such as during and after surgery. |