

Neutropenia

Neutrophils are white blood cells necessary for removing and destroying bacteria in the blood. Neutropenia is a neutrophil count of less than $1500/\mu\text{L}$ in infancy and childhood. Ninety to ninety-five percent of neutropenias are due to viral infections, which decrease production in the marrow or increase destruction. Severe bacterial infections are a complication of neutropenia when levels are less than $500/\mu\text{L}$. When a child has neutropenia, the blood count will be monitored to ensure a return to normal levels. It may take 4-8 weeks for the neutrophil count to return to normal levels. Since neutropenia is rarely linked to bone marrow production problems it is important to follow up with blood work and confirm levels greater than $1500/\mu\text{L}$. If your child develops a temperature (over 101°) and is neutropenic it is important to contact the doctor.