

Blood Transfusion

Blood Transfusion – Patient Information

If you are going to have a blood, plasma or platelet transfusion then this leaflet will provide useful information for you. If you have any further questions or concerns then please discuss this with a member of the ward staff.

Red cell transfusion

Usually you will have been prescribed a red cell transfusion for anaemia. The red blood cells are essential for carrying oxygen around the body. Anaemia is when the level of red blood cells in your circulation is too low. A blood transfusion may be given because of a shortage of red blood cells, either because the body is not making enough of them or due to blood loss. The aim of the transfusion is to make you feel better (stronger, less tired or short of breath).

Platelet transfusion

Platelets are tiny cells in the blood that play an essential role in stopping bleeding. A platelet transfusion is generally required to treat people with extremely low levels of platelets in the blood.

Plasma/ Cryoprecipitate transfusion

Plasma is the fluid in the blood that contains proteins that help the blood to clot. Plasma transfusions may be required in patients who have problems with blood clotting.

What is a crossmatch?

There are different blood groups, which vary from person to person. Before a



blood transfusion is given, a blood sample will be taken to match your blood with a suitable blood unit in the Blood Bank. This will reduce the chance of you experiencing a reaction. Having a reaction does not mean that the blood is infected; it usually reflects the fact that your body can recognise blood from someone else. The two most important blood groups are the: ABO and Rh (D) groups. The blood given will be of the same or a compatible ABO and Rh (D) group to your own. Any other special requirements will be identified in the laboratory. It is useful to know your own blood group and check that you are being given blood of a compatible group.

How is blood given?

Blood is given directly into the circulation via a vein. Generally a transfusion will take 2 hours for each unit but it can take up to 3 ½ hours.

Is blood transfusion safe?

In the United Kingdom, all blood donors are unpaid volunteers who are carefully questioned about their health. Before donation every effort is made to identify and exclude those who are at risk of passing on infections. Any blood which fails the strict tests is discarded and the donor is informed. The testing process is regularly checked to ensure the highest standards are maintained. The risks of having a blood transfusion will be balanced against the risks to your health of not having a blood transfusion. The health care professional looking after you will discuss the risks and benefits during the consent process. Please feel free to discuss the balance of risk/benefit in your particular case.

Can I still be a blood donor?

If you receive a blood, plasma or a platelet transfusion you will not be able to donate blood. For more information discuss this with your health care professional or contact the Hospital Transfusion Team

How will I feel during my treatment?

Most people do not feel anything whilst receiving a blood transfusion and you will be carefully monitored during your transfusion. Before or during the transfusion please:

- Ensure you are wearing a wristband with your name and date of birth before the transfusion commences.

Patient Information

- When asked, state your full name and date of birth to the member of staff providing your transfusion
- Report any previous problems with transfusion
- Discuss any questions or worries with staff before transfusion begins
- If you experience any of the following symptoms, you must inform a member of the ward staff:

Chest pain	Fever
Feeling faint	Skin flushing / rash
Heart beating differently	Shortness of breath
Feeling anxious	Feeling sick
Headache	Generally feeling unwell
Shivering	Stomach ache Restlessness
Back pain	Pain at the site of infusion

If you require any further information and have access to the internet you may find the following websites useful:

NHS Choices

<http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/blood-transfusion/pages/introduction.aspx>

UK Transfusion Services

<http://www.transfusionguidelines.org.uk/index.aspx>

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another format please contact the hospital switchboard on 024 7696 4000 and ask for the Hospital Transfusion Team on bleep 1287 or 2280.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy.

Patient Information

To give feedback on this leaflet please email feedback@uhcw.nhs.uk

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