

Patient Information

## Neonatal Unit

# Neonatal blood transfusion

Baby's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Unit Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Blood Group: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of transfusion: \_\_\_\_\_

If your baby is going to have a blood transfusion, this leaflet will provide you with important information. If you have any questions or concerns, please discuss this with a member of the neonatal unit staff.

## Why your baby needs a blood transfusion

Usually, a transfusion is prescribed to correct anaemia. Anaemia is when the level of red cells in your baby's circulation is low. A blood transfusion (or "top up") will increase the number of red cells in your baby's circulation.

The aim of the transfusion is to make your baby feel better. The transfusion will help them be stronger, less tired or short of breath, and have fewer desaturations.

For different conditions, babies may be given other blood products. For example, they may be given platelets if their platelet levels are low.



### **Blood transfusion safety**

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.

Every unit of donated blood is then individually tested. Any blood which fails these strict tests is discarded. The testing process is regularly checked to make sure the highest standards are maintained.

The risks of having a blood transfusion will be balanced against the risks to your baby's health of not having a blood transfusion. You can discuss this with the doctor or advanced neonatal nurse practitioner (ANNP) looking after your baby on the Unit.

All blood transfused to babies is labelled specifically for neonatal use.

### **Crossmatch**

There are different blood groups which vary from person to person. Before a unit of blood is selected for transfusion, baby and mother's blood both need to be tested. The tests tell us the baby's blood group, if they are Rhesus positive or negative, and if there are any "maternal antibodies" in the blood.

This is done because newborn babies' blood can be affected by their mother's blood. This might change how the baby's body treats the transfused blood. Your baby's blood will then be matched with a blood unit in the Blood Bank.

Babies do not usually need a whole unit of blood at once.

Blood Bank will match your baby with a unit of blood that has been split into 4 to 6 smaller bags. All these bags are then reserved specifically for your baby. So, your baby will usually only receive blood from a single donor, even if they need more than one transfusion or "top up."

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### How we give your baby blood

We give blood directly into your baby's circulation through a vein. Usually, a transfusion takes 3 to 4 hours. In some cases, the amount of your baby's feed might be reduced or stopped during the transfusion.

For some babies, a medicine might be given to make them pass more urine. Please feel free to discuss this with either the nurse caring for the baby or with the Doctor or ANNP on the Unit.

### More information

If you'd like more information or if you would like this information in another language or format, please contact the Neonatal team at 024 76 96 6668.

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this Information in another language or format, please contact us on 024 7696 6668 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke-free policy.

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