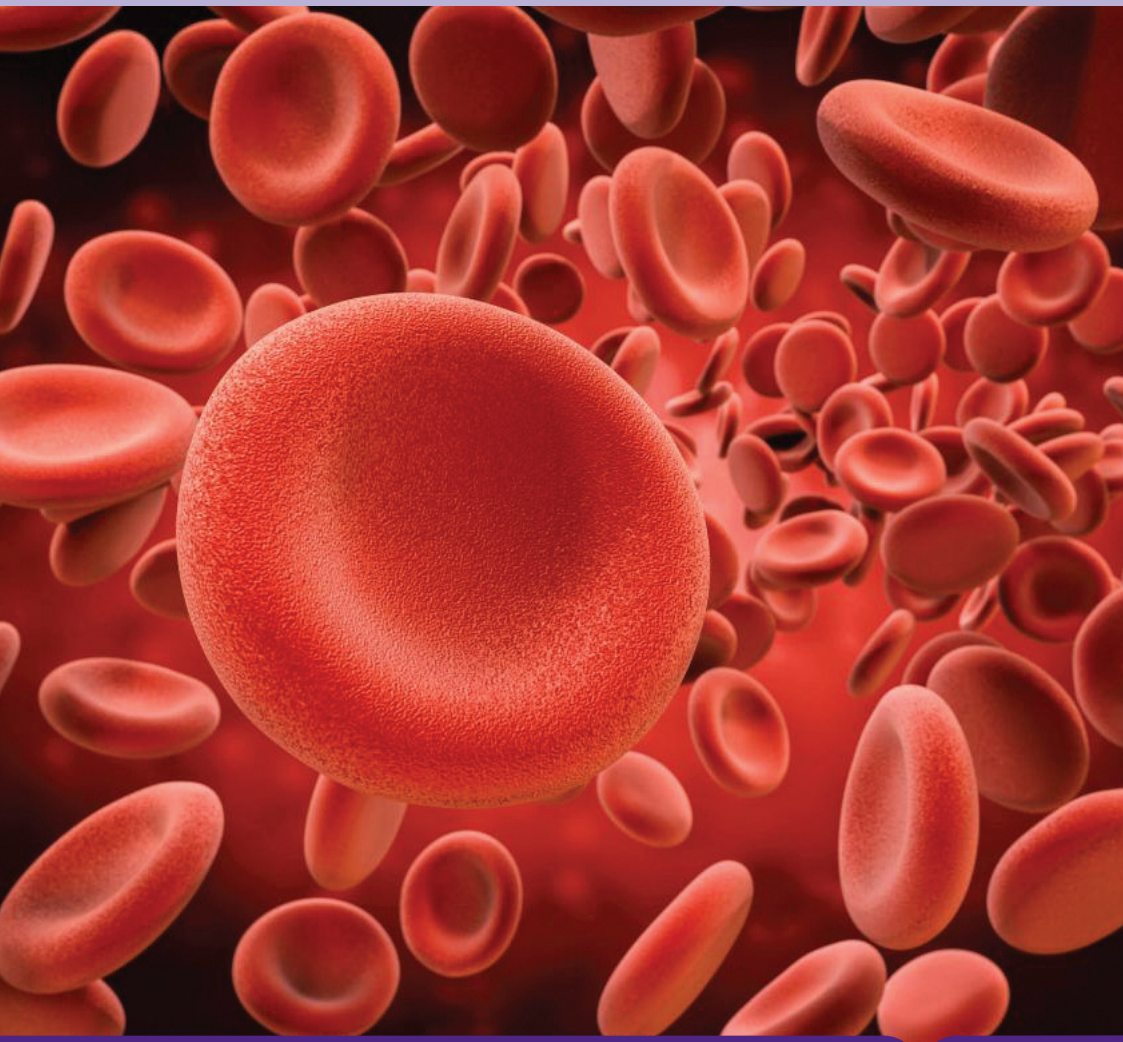
NHS

Liverpool Heart and Chest Hospital

NHS Foundation Trust

Information for Patients & Families

Transfusion Consent Leaflet



Excellent, Compassionate and Safe care for every patient, every day

This information booklet has been written as a guide for patients on the process of consent and transfusion.

Blood carries cells and vital proteins around the body.

- Red blood cells contain Haemoglobin which carries oxygen white blood cells fight infection.
- Platelets are fragments of cells and work together with clotting factors to help blood clots form at the sight of an injury.
- Plasma is a liquid that holds all of these cells together in suspension.

A blood transfusion involves taking blood from one person (the donor) and giving it to someone else. This is sometimes used to treat anaemia. Anaemia can occur if the body is not making red cells properly or if red cells are lost through bleeding.

The blood provided by donors can be separated into different components:-

- Red cells
- Plasma
- White cells
- Platelets

If it is known that you have a temporary cause of anaemia but feel otherwise well, you may not require a transfusion and your blood will recover to a normal level which may take a few weeks. Your doctor will advise you further regarding this.

Iron deficiency is the most common cause of anaemia and can usually be treated with iron tablets. Having a diet rich in lean red meat, oily fish, pulses and breakfast cereals prevent iron deficiency. More information is available in the Blood and Transplant leaflet “Iron in the Diet” which is available at or from your doctor or nurse.

If your anaemia cannot be treated with medication you may need a red cell transfusion, this is a very simple procedure.

In the UK blood transfusion is very safe; blood is given through a tiny tube into a vein. It may take up to 3 hours to give each bag of blood but a transfusion can be given more quickly if needed.

Platelets like red cells are carried in the blood they help the blood to clot. A low platelet count can be caused either by a decreased number of platelets in the bone marrow or where the life of the platelets is reduced, for example where a patient experiences significant blood loss.

Like red cells platelets are donated by blood donors. A platelet transfusion can take up to 60 minutes but can be given more quickly if needed.

Plasma is the liquid that carries blood cells around the body it contains clotting factors as well as other proteins, salts and hormones. Clotting factors together with platelets enable blood to clot when needed. Plasma is separated from regular blood donations and frozen; it is thawed again before it is transfused. Doctors and nurses often refer to plasma as FFP which stands for ‘Fresh Frozen Plasma’. Plasma is usually used to replace low clotting factors, this can occur in patients with liver disease or some inherited bleeding disorders. Plasma may also be required for patients who have lost a lot of blood or are having major surgery.

Most people do not feel any discomfort or have any adverse reaction during a transfusion. The risk of causing harm or death as a result of a transfusion is very low. You will be observed before, during and after your transfusion, if you feel unwell you should inform your nurse immediately. Occasionally people may develop a fever, chills or a rash during their transfusion. These symptoms are usually mild and can be treated with Paracetamol or anti histamines, or by slowing or stopping the transfusion.

Severe reactions to blood are extremely rare, if they do occur staff are trained to recognise them and treat them. In the unlikely event that you feel unwell once you have gone home following your transfusion, you should call your doctor or go to your local Accident & Emergency Department (A&E) at your local hospital.

Many people worry about getting an infection from a blood transfusion but the chance of getting an infection is very low. All blood donors are unpaid volunteers and the risk of an infected unit entering the UK blood supply is low. Being infected with hepatitis B, hepatitis C, hepatitis E, or HIV carries a risk of fewer than one person in a million.

There is a slightly higher chance of getting a bacterial infection from platelet transfusions than other types of transfusions. The risk is reduced by careful procedures performed before the collection and storage. If you feel unwell during your transfusion you should let your nurse know immediately.

The most important way to make your transfusion safe is to ensure you are getting the right blood. You can help your nurse or doctor by clearly stating your name and date of birth when asked to do so. This can get very frustrating, especially if you are receiving many different treatments and repeatedly being asked your name even to people who know you well. Patient safety is our priority, and this is the safest and most effective way to ensure that you receive the correct treatment.

If you have received a blood transfusion you can no longer donate blood. Everyone who donates blood are asked if they have previously received a blood transfusion. Not everyone who is anaemic or has low platelets or clotting factor levels are required to receive a transfusion. Your doctor or nurse will advise if there are any alternative treatments you can have, including iron replacement, which can treat some causes of anaeamia.

An alternatives to blood transfusion is known as Cell Salvage. This is when your own blood is recycled during surgery. This is used routinely when blood loss is anticipated but in many straightforward cases it is not required. Your surgeon will always use this where it is indicated.

In Summary

If you are told you need a transfusion ask your doctor or nurse what alternatives are available for you.

If you have had a blood transfusion you can no longer donate blood.

Blood transfusion is very safe thanks to volunteers giving their blood all over the UK every week.

You may find the following websites useful:

NHS choices;
www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Blood-transfusion/Pages/Introduction.aspx

NHS Blood and Transplant:
www.nhsbt.nhs.uk/what-we-do/blood-transfusion/

For further information visit:
www.lhch.nhs.uk

If you require a copy of this leaflet in any other format or language please contact us quoting the leaflet code and the language or format you require.

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如果您想索取一份以其他語文或形式（如大字體）編印成的資料傳單，請致電 0151 600 1257向我們查詢，並說明您所需要的形式和語文。
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