

Patient & Family Guide
2019

Blood Transfusion

Aussi disponible en français :
La transfusion sanguine (FF85-1811)

"متوفر أيضاً باللغة العربية"



www.nshealth.ca

Blood Transfusion

You have been given this pamphlet because you or your family member may need a blood transfusion. The health care team will describe the benefits and risks of a transfusion and what is involved.

A blood transfusion will only be given if needed. The doctor or nurse practitioner (NP) will talk with you about whether you or your family member might need a blood transfusion and why.

What is a blood transfusion?

A blood transfusion is a procedure in which blood is given through an intravenous (IV) line in a vein, usually in the arm. A transfusion may also be injected into a muscle or under the skin using a needle. A blood transfusion may include:

- › blood components
- › blood products

Why would my family member or I need a transfusion?

Blood is made of distinct parts that do different jobs to keep us healthy. The part of blood that you or your family member may need will depend on the specific problem or illness. A blood component or a blood product (or a combination of the two) might be needed.

What are blood components?

Blood components are parts of whole blood. They can help with providing oxygen to organs, increasing blood pressure or helping to prevent or control bleeding. If the health care team thinks a blood component is needed, they will tell you which component(s) you or your family member may need and describe what it does, along with the risks, benefits, and how it is given.

What are blood products?

Blood products are made from human plasma or created in a lab. There are many kinds of blood products that affect the body in different ways. The health care team will tell you which product(s) may be needed and describe what it does, along with the risks, benefits, and how it is given.

Where does the blood come from?

Blood is collected from healthy volunteer donors at Canadian Blood Services (CBS). CBS tests all blood for diseases including syphilis, hepatitis B, hepatitis C, HIV, Human T-Cell lymphotropic virus, and West Nile Virus to make sure it is safe for transfusion.

Informed consent

The doctor or nurse practitioner will talk with you about why a transfusion is needed. If you agree to the transfusion, you will be asked to sign a consent form. You have the right to refuse a blood transfusion. If you refuse, you will be asked to sign a Refusal or Limited Consent for Transfusion of Blood Components and/or Blood Products form.

If you have any questions or concerns, please ask the doctor or nurse practitioner before signing the consent form.

Risks

Transfusions have some risks. There is a chance of a reaction, which is an unwanted response to the transfusion. It can happen during or after the transfusion. Tell a member of the health care team right away if you or your family member feel anything unusual (see page 5 for what to watch for).

Sometimes there may be an allergic reaction or a rise in temperature. There is a **very small chance** of getting a virus or infection, or of being given the wrong blood component or product. There are many times when the need for a transfusion is much greater than the possible risks.

Are there other options to having a transfusion?

Ask your health care team for details about options that may be available to you instead of a blood transfusion.

What will happen when a transfusion takes place?

- The nurse will monitor blood pressure, pulse and temperature before, during and after the transfusion. The nurse will also ask how you or your family member are feeling.
- Most transfusions are given through an IV.
- Two members of the health care team will check the blood component or product in front of you to make sure it is the right blood. There are a few exceptions to this, for example when using the product WinRho[®], when one member of the health care team and the patient or substitute decision maker may check the product together.
- Depending on what component or product is needed, the transfusion can take anywhere from a few minutes to 4 hours.

After a transfusion

Reactions are rare and usually mild, but they can happen after any transfusion, even if you have never had a reaction before. It's important that you watch for and tell your health care team if you have any of these symptoms:

- › rash, hives, itching
- › feeling sick or vomiting
- › increased coughing
- › headache, dizziness
- › sensitivity to bright light
- › fever/chills
- › cold, clammy skin
- › feeling unusually or extremely tired
- › back/chest pain
- › trouble breathing, wheezing
- › red/brown (bloody) urine (pee)
- › yellow skin or yellowing of eye whites

If you feel unwell at home, call 811 to talk with a registered nurse.

**What are your questions?
Please ask. We are here to help you.**

Go to the nearest Emergency Department right away if you have any of the following symptoms:

- › severe (bad) nausea and vomiting
- › severe back, chest or head pain
- › trouble breathing
- › blood in your urine (pee)

Do not drive yourself.

Tell the Emergency Department staff that you have recently had a blood transfusion.

Looking for more health information?

Find this pamphlet and all our patient resources here: <http://library.nshealth.ca/PatientGuides>

Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazines, and other resources.

For more information, go to <http://library.novascotia.ca>

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time: call 811 or visit <https://811.novascotia.ca>

Learn about other programs and services in your community: call 211 or visit <http://ns.211.ca>

Nova Scotia Health Authority promotes a smoke-free, vape-free, and scent-free environment.

Please do not use perfumed products. Thank you!

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The information in this brochure is for informational and educational purposes only.
The information is not intended to be and does not constitute health care or medical advice.
If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

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The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.