

Checklist

- Do you understand why you may need a Blood Transfusion?
- Have the risks and benefits of Blood Transfusion been explained to you?
- Do you understand about any alternatives to blood?
- Have all your questions been answered?

Remember

A blood transfusion is only given to you when the benefits are greater than the risks for you.

You are encouraged to ask questions about your treatment at any stage.

For further information:

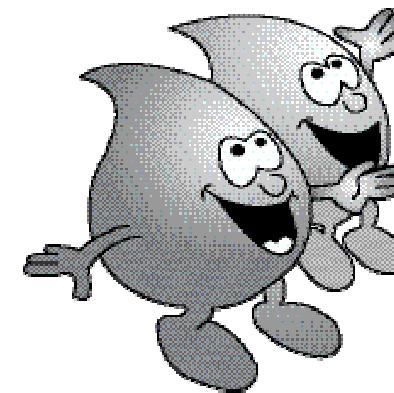
www.nhmrc.gov.au

www.asbt.org.au

www.giveblood.redcross.org.au

Contact

For further information, please contact your Doctor



Your Guide To Blood Transfusion

BLOOD TRANSFUSION

What is it?

Why do I need it?

You have been given this leaflet because your Doctor considers that you may need to have a blood transfusion.

A blood transfusion involves receiving blood, or a product that comes from blood, into your body.

Blood transfusions are needed for a variety of reasons.

Red Blood Cells

- Used to treat anaemia (low blood count)
- Used during surgery or after an accident to treat severe bleeding

Other Blood Products

- Used to stop bleeding due to certain medications, treatments or disease
- Used to replace certain clotting factors or proteins that help in controlling bleeding



Where does blood come from?

All blood in Australia comes from voluntary unpaid donors.

What are the risks and benefits of a blood transfusion?

Benefits: Blood can save lives. It can also improve the quality of life for people with certain blood disorders.

Risks: Blood transfusion, as with all medical treatment, involves some risk.

- Infections – all blood is tested for viruses, such as HIV and hepatitis, so the risk of infection is extremely low. Donors who have been in contact with any risk to the blood supply (such as bacterial infections) are not allowed to donate blood.
- Reactions – mild reactions such as fever or skin rash may occur. You will be watched closely throughout the transfusion for early signs of reactions and the appropriate care will be taken.

You can ask questions at any stage of the transfusion process.

Are there any alternatives to blood?

Alternatives to blood transfusion are continually being developed and used wherever possible. You can ask your Doctor about these alternatives. Improved surgical methods are used to decrease the amount of bleeding and minimize the need for blood.

However, the risks of NOT having a blood transfusion when you need one are greater than the risks of transfusion.

Can I use my own blood?

Some people feel it is safer to use their own blood if required during surgery. Blood that is collected before surgery and stored for your use is known as autologous blood.

This is not always possible for many patients and your Doctor can discuss the risks and benefits associated with this well before your surgery