

# 30-minute/4-hour rule

## What does it mean?

### '30-minute rule'



Start transfusion within  
'30-minutes' or return to  
blood fridge

**Blood out of the fridge for  
> '30 minutes'?**

Can still administer –  
move to the '4-hour rule'

### '4-hour rule'



Transfusion **must**  
be complete within  
**30-minutes + 4-hours**<sup>1</sup>

### Remember

- Blood should be commenced as soon as it arrives in the clinical area (after pretransfusion checks).
- If blood is returned to storage after '30 minutes', it will be discarded. If the blood is still required, do not return to storage. Instead, follow the '4-hour rule' for transfusion.
- Untransfused blood must always be returned to blood bank or blood fridge for documentation of discard.
  - If **any** part of the unit is administered, the unit is fated as transfused. Blood bank does not need to be notified, even if remainder of unit is discarded.
- Discuss the possibility of a rate change with medical staff to prevent the transfusion exceeding allowed time.
- Giving most of the unit may be enough to improve signs and symptoms of anaemia. Inform medical staff if unable to give entire unit in allowed time.

<sup>1</sup> Or as per your local policy. Some health services may stipulate 4 hours as the total allowable time to transfuse.

## Reference

Australian and New Zealand Society of Blood Transfusion 2019, [Guidelines for the administration of blood products](#), 3rd ed., ANZSBT, Sydney.

## Acknowledgements

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