

writing your details onto the blood sample in your presence at the bed site before sending the sample off to pathology.

If you think your details are not correct, please tell the person collecting the blood sample.

All patients receiving blood components **must** wear an identification band. Before a transfusion commences, two staff members will check your identification again and confirm that all details on the blood order and blood unit are the same and correct. This check has to occur with every unit that will be administered to you.

If you are concerned at all during the identification check or at any time, please tell us.

If you are concerned during or after the transfusion

Transfusions usually take between 2-4 hours. You will be closely monitored before, during and after your transfusion with staff members checking your temperature, heart rate, blood pressure and breathing. Although most people feel no different during a blood transfusion, **if you feel unwell in any way, tell the staff of your concerns immediately.**



Consumer Endorsed
Patient Information Publication

Reactions to blood transfusions may include:

- difficulties breathing
- nausea/vomiting
- chest pain
- headache
- chills
- high temperature
- shaking
- pain at the needle site
- rash
- itching
- hives
- fast or irregular heartbeat
- restlessness
- dark or decreased amount of urine



Reactions to blood components can occur during your transfusion or reactions may be delayed and occur once your transfusion has been completed.

If you have been discharged and then feel unwell such as feeling hot or feverish, a rash appears that was not there prior to the transfusion, have any difficulty in breathing or shortness of breath you should contact or see your doctor or present to the nearest emergency department for assessment.

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Blood Transfusion and Blood Products Information for Patients



Calvary

John James Hospital

Continuing the Mission of the Sisters of the Little Company of Mary

What is a transfusion?



When you receive blood or blood components, it is called a transfusion. When blood is collected from a donor it can be split into three parts (components): red cells, platelets and plasma. What you receive depends on your medical condition.

In Australia, blood is collected by the Australian Red Cross Blood Service from voluntary, unpaid donors.

All donors are interviewed and assessed for suitability to donate blood. Every blood donation is tested for the presence of certain infections such as HIV, hepatitis B and hepatitis C.

Common reasons for blood and blood product transfusions

Do not be afraid to ask **why** you need a transfusion. Some common reasons for blood and blood product transfusion are:

- an accident where there is significant blood loss
- an operation where there is significant blood loss
- an illness that affects how your blood cells work
- cancer treatment that may affect the way your body makes blood cells
- blood loss because of some other illness or condition.

What are the Risks?

Blood transfusions are not completely free from risk. Risks of transfusion include:

- minor reactions including a mild temperature or skin rash
- fluid overload, causing breathing difficulties, especially in older patients
- receiving blood that is not correctly 'matched' to you
- severe reactions, for example, allergy
- lung injury, in severe cases, even death
- transmission of infection, for example, bacteria or viruses.

Can I avoid a transfusion?

It may be possible to reduce or avoid the need for a transfusion. Please discuss your options with your health care team and discuss **Alternative Transfusion Strategies** in particular if you are booked for elective surgery.

If you do need a transfusion, you should receive only what is needed to relieve your symptoms. One bag may be enough, however this can still cause a reaction.

Consent

Any treatment, including blood or blood product transfusion, is your choice and will not take place without your prior consent (except in emergency lifesaving situations

where you or your approved advocate does not have the capacity to consent).

Like any form of medical treatment, you have a right to refuse, change your mind or seek more information. Before you are given a transfusion, you should be asked to agree to have a transfusion. Use the checklist below to help you make an informed decision about your treatment:

- Am I aware of why I need the transfusion?
- Am I aware of which blood component/s will be transfused?
- Am I aware of the expected benefits of this transfusion?
- Am I aware of the potential risks and side effects?
- Am I aware of potential alternatives?
- Have all of my questions have been answered?

Your Identification

The most avoidable risk with transfusion is receiving the wrong blood. This is why checking your identity is so important when sampling your blood for cross-match and when transfusing the appropriate blood unit.

The person taking your blood sample must verbally check your identification, confirming it with your hospital identification wrist band stating your name, date of birth and medical record number (MRN), before