



Emergency Multidisciplinary Unit

# Advice for Patients after a Blood Transfusion

This leaflet provides you with some important information about the blood transfusion you have received whilst under the care of Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust.

## **Transfusion reactions**

Most blood transfusions take place without any problems, but having a blood transfusion carries a very small risk of developing side effects.

The symptoms are usually caused by an immune reaction to the blood you have received and occur unpredictably, but regular blood transfusions may increase the chance of them happening. However, they are still uncommon even in patients that regularly receive blood transfusions.

The symptoms may develop within several hours, or in some cases may happen days or weeks later. They are usually mild but it is very important that you report any unusual or unexpected symptoms to a doctor or nurse.

## What are the signs and symptoms?

If you experience any of the following:

- A high temperature (above 38°C)
- Feeling feverish, hot and clammy
- Shivering or 'cold chills'
- Breathing problems
- Extreme tiredness
- Blood in your urine
- Passing much less, or very dark urine
- Itchy skin rash
- Unexpected or unexplained bruising
- Jaundice (yellow colour of the white of your eyes or your skin).

If you have been discharged please contact your GP or call NHS 111 service as soon as possible for advice if you experience any of symptoms listed above – ensure that you tell them you have recently received a blood transfusion.

In the rare event of an emergency (i.e. a life threatening problem, for example difficulty with breathing), call 999 for an ambulance.

## What treatments are available?

Most symptoms can be treated with simple medications like paracetamol or an antihistamine (allergy medication).

More serious reactions may need treatment in hospital, however this is rare. You may be given paracetamol or antihistamine before future blood transfusions if you have experienced a reaction before.

## Please note

New national rules say that anyone who has had a blood transfusion **cannot** be a blood donor in the future. Therefore please note that after this transfusion, you cannot donate blood.

If you have feedback regarding the accuracy of the information contained in this leaflet, please email [oxfordhealth.abingdon.emu@nhs.net](mailto:oxfordhealth.abingdon.emu@nhs.net)

## Further Information:

NHS Blood and Transplant

<https://www.blood.co.uk/>

If you would like further non urgent information or advice about this, or any other aspects of blood transfusion, please discuss this with your hospital doctor, nurse, midwife or transfusion practitioner before you go home or your GP once you have been discharged.

Reproduced with the consent of Lorraine Poole: Dorset County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

## References:

NHS Blood and Transplant

Available from: <http://hospital.blood.co.uk/patient-services/patient-blood-management/patient-information-leaflets/>

NHS Choices

Available from: <http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Blood-transfusion/Pages/Introduction.aspx>

Norfolk, D. 2013. *Handbook of Transfusion Medicine*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Norwich: TSO information & publishing solutions.

Available from: <http://www.transfusionsguidelines.org.uk/transfusion-handbook>

If you would like to have information translated into a different language, please contact the Equality and Diversity Team at: [EqualityandInclusion@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk](mailto:EqualityandInclusion@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk)

**Arabic** يُرجى الاتصال بنا إذا كنتم ترغبون في الحصول على المعلومات بلغة أخرى أو بتسليق مختلف.

**Bengali** আপনি এই তথ্য অন্য ভাষায় বা আলাদা আকারে পেতে চাইলে অনুগ্রহ করে আমাদের সাথে যোগাযোগ করুন।  
**Urdu** اگر آپ یہ معلومات دیگر زبان یا مختلف فارمیٹ میں چاہتے ہیں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے رابطہ کریں۔

**Chinese** 若要以其他語言或格式提供這些資訊，請與我們聯繫

**Polish** Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku lub w innym formacie, skontaktuj się z nami.

**Portuguese** Queira contactar-nos se pretender as informações noutra idioma ou num formato diferente.

Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust  
Trust Headquarters  
Warneford Hospital  
Warneford Lane  
Headington  
Oxford  
OX3 7JX

Switchboard 01865 901 000  
Email [enquiries@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk](mailto:enquiries@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk)  
Website [www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk](http://www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk)

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