

Your responsibilities during a blood transfusion are:

1. Let us know if you have had a previous blood transfusion and whether you had a problem with it.
2. Discuss any questions or worries with us about receiving blood before the transfusion begins.
3. During the transfusion, let us know if you feel unwell in any way. Tell us if you have any of the following symptoms:

Chest pain
Skin flushing
Fever
Stomach pain
Restlessness
Palpitations
Faintness
Shortness of breath
Anxiety
Shivering
Back pain

Do I have to pay for services from the Hospice?

No, all services offered by the Hospice are free. As a charity we are dependent on the local community for support. We receive just 16% of our funding from the NHS. If you would like to make a donation please ask a member of staff or visit our website.

Where can I have a blood transfusion?

We can give you a transfusion on the ward, where you may need to stay for one or two nights. You may be able to have a blood transfusion in day hospice and only stay for a few hours.



Members of the inpatient nursing team at Phyllis Tuckwell Hospice.

Please telephone Day Hospice or the ward at the Hospice with any concerns before or after a blood transfusion.

Hospice Telephone number: 01252 729400

Phyllis Tuckwell Hospice



Blood Transfusions



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The purpose of this leaflet is to answer questions frequently asked about blood transfusions at the Hospice

Why do I need a blood transfusion?

You have been prescribed a blood transfusion because the level of red cells in your blood is too low. A blood transfusion replaces red cells. Oxygen is carried around the body by red blood cells. If the level of red blood cells is too low, oxygen levels in the blood will be reduced. This can lead to you feeling breathless and tired.

Are blood transfusions safe?

There are few risks when being given a blood transfusion. Blood donations in the UK are very carefully collected and screened. Donors are asked questions about activities that put them at risk of infection. The blood is laboratory tested for infections. It will be discarded if it fails these tests. There is a very small risk of getting an infection through a blood transfusion. Very rarely, people develop a reaction to a blood transfusion.

What is a “crossmatch”?

A blood sample will be taken from you and sent to the laboratory. It will be carefully matched with a unit of blood from a donor. The two main groups: ABO and Rhesus D are tested. You will usually be given blood from the same group as yours. There are many other groups, but they are too many to match.

Could I react to a blood transfusion?

Occasionally people will react to a blood transfusion with a fever. This means that the body has recognised blood from someone else. We will be able to deal with a reaction to a blood transfusion.

How is the blood given?

A plastic needle will be placed into a vein in your arm. A clear dressing will be placed over the needle to hold it in place. We will inspect the needle at frequent intervals to check that there are no problems with it. The blood will be dripped into your vein through clear tubing. Sometimes we will run the tubing through a pump to be sure the blood transfusion goes at the right speed. Usually one unit is given over two hours, but sometimes it will be a little longer.



What are the responsibilities of the Hospice during a blood transfusion?

1. We will make sure that we give you the correct blood. Two nurses or a nurse and a doctor will check the blood at your bedside.
2. We will make sure that the blood has been stored correctly.
3. We will take your temperature, pulse, blood pressure and breathing rate before you are given blood. This is to make sure you are well enough to receive the blood. We also need to know what the normal readings for you are.
4. We will take readings 15 and 30 minutes after the blood transfusion starts and at the end of each unit. This is to check for a reaction.
5. We will check to see how you are while the blood is being given.
6. We will answer your questions and concerns about receiving blood.
7. If you have any concerns or questions please ask one of the nurses or the doctors for further information.