



Give this patient information sheet to the patient or substitute decision-maker(s) to read carefully and allow time to ask any questions about the procedure.

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1. What is a fresh blood or blood products transfusion and how will it help me?

Your doctor has recommended that you have a transfusion of fresh blood or blood products, which are from volunteer donors. Blood is collected and screened by the Australian Red Cross Blood Service.

A transfusion is necessary to replace a part of your blood.

A transfusion is given to either:

- replace red blood cells to treat or prevent anaemia, improve oxygen transport and relieve symptoms of dizziness, tiredness or shortness of breath; or
• to give you platelets to help stop or prevent bleeding; or
• to give a fresh plasma product to stop, treat or prevent bleeding.

Transfusions are given via a cannula (needle in your vein) or a central line into your vein. You will be closely watched for any reactions. You will also be regularly checked as to whether you need another blood transfusion.

2. What are the specific risks of a fresh blood or blood products transfusion?

There are risks and complications with this procedure. They include but are not limited to the following.

Common risks and complications include:

- high temperature;
• rash, itching and hives;
• feeling a bit unwell.

Rare risks and complications include:

- having too much blood/fluids, giving you shortness of breath;
• haemolysis, the abnormal breakdown of red blood cells;
• the development of antibodies which may complicate future transfusions and/or organ or tissue transplants. If these complications develop in women they can potentially cause problems for all current and future unborn babies;
• lung injury causing shortness of breath;
• the spread of viral or other infectious germs from the blood of the donors;
• very rarely, these above reactions can cause severe harm or possibly death.

3. What are the risks specific to me?

There may also be risks specific to your individual condition and circumstances. Please discuss these with your doctor and ensure they are written on the consent form before you sign it.

4. What are the risks of not having the fresh blood or blood products transfusion?

There may be consequences if you choose not to have the proposed transfusion. Please discuss these with your doctor.

If you choose not to have the procedure you will not be required to sign a consent form.

5. What are other relevant treatment options that you may have?

In some situations there may be other choices to a blood transfusion and these include:

- fluid replacement with saline or other artificial compounds and/or iron supplements.

Please discuss these options with your doctor as they are not suitable for everybody.

6. Useful sources of information

A general guide to blood transfusion – information for patients and families:

Australian Red Cross Blood Service
http://www.mytransfusion.com.au

Please note that patient information is available in English and other languages.
http://www.cec.health.nsw.gov.au/

7. Questions to ask my doctor/clinician

Please ask your doctor if you do not understand any aspect of the information in this patient information sheet or any other information you have been given about your condition, treatment options and proposed procedure.

Empty box with horizontal lines for writing questions.