

Clinical Pathology Department

Advice for Patients after a Blood Transfusion

This leaflet contains important information about possible side effects you might experience after receiving a blood component transfusion. These side effects are rare, but it is important to recognise them, and to know what to do if you experience them.

Transfusion Reactions

Most blood transfusions take place without problems, but having a transfusion carries a very small risk of developing side effects. These are known as 'Transfusion Reactions'. The symptoms develop hours, days or weeks later. They are usually mild, but it is very important that you report any symptoms to a doctor or nurse.

What are the symptoms?

- 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 (yellowing of your eyes or skin)

If you experience any of these symptoms, contact your GP or call NHS 111 as soon as possible. Please ensure you tell them that you have recently received a transfusion. In the rare event of an emergency call **999** for an ambulance.

How is a Transfusion Reaction treated?

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.

Please note:

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.**

Further information

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

About this leaflet:

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If you have feedback regarding the accuracy of the information contained in this leaflet, or if you would like a list of references used to develop this leaflet, please email pals@dchft.nhs.uk

