

It is important to tell your physician or nurse if you have had a reaction to blood or blood products in the past.

Blood Transfusion – Receiving Blood and Blood Products

This guide will help you understand what to expect if you are going to receive a blood transfusion. A blood transfusion is a common procedure through which donated blood or blood products from a volunteer donor are given through an intravenous (IV) line to a patient. Transfusions are given to replace low levels of blood and blood products when a person is bleeding or cannot make blood properly because of a medical condition. Blood transfusions usually occur without any complications. You will be asked to consent to the transfusion by signing a form. If you have any questions or concerns, please talk with your physician or nurse.

Before the transfusion

A sample of your blood will be taken and tested to make sure that it is a safe match with the donor blood. Your blood will be checked for:

- Blood type (A, AB, B, O)
- Rh Factor (positive or negative)
- Antibodies (if there are unexpected antibodies, it may take longer to get blood ready)

In some cases, an additional blood sample is needed to complete the matching process.

When the blood samples are taken, a small sticker with your unique 4-letter code is placed on your hospital ID bracelet or photo ID (for outpatients). Do not remove the sticker or ID bracelet until you are told to do so by a healthcare team member. Before transfusing each blood product, 2 members of the healthcare team will check the code on the sticker and your identification to ensure you are given the correct blood.

During the transfusion

You may eat, drink and move around during the transfusion, as long as it does not interfere with the transfusion IV line and blood bag. Your transfusion may infuse in a short time or it may take as long as 4 hours to complete. The nurse will monitor you closely before, during and after each transfusion.

Tell your healthcare team if you have any of the following symptoms:

- Pain or swelling at the IV site
- Difficulty breathing or wheezing
- Itching, rash or hives
- Feeling hot or cold
- Feeling sick to your stomach
- Headache, or back or chest pain

After the transfusion

You can return to your normal activities after the transfusion. Sometimes, you can have a delayed reaction to a transfusion.

Call your physician or healthcare team if you have any of the following symptoms:

- Fever
- Dark urine
- Whites of your eyes or skin become yellow

Healthcare team member _____

Phone _____