

Blood Transfusions

your responsibilities during a blood transfusion are:

1. To let us know if you have had a previous blood transfusion and whether you had a problem with it.
2. To discuss with us any questions or worries you may have about receiving blood, before the transfusion begins.
3. During the transfusion, to 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 Phyllis Tuckwell?

No, all services offered by Phyllis Tuckwell are free. As a charity we are dependent on the local community for their generosity and financial support. We only receive 20% of our funding from the NHS/Government and therefore we have to raise over £20,000 a day to provide all our services. If you would like to make a donation, please ask a member of staff, or visit our website.

Thank you.

Large print version available on request.

Phyllis Tuckwell Hospice Care

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February 2020



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'?

This is where a blood sample is taken from you and sent to the laboratory. It is then 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.

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 the Day Hospice and only stay for a few hours.

Please phone the ward if your blood transfusion is due to be administered there, for advice prior to blood transfusion or following blood transfusion.

Phone the Day Hospice if your blood transfusion is to be administered there.

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 and in some cases the transfusion may be stopped.

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 to three hours, but sometimes it will be a little longer.

prior to your blood transfusion

If you are able, please try to drink plenty of fluids, as this will help 'prepare' your veins prior to the needle being inserted.

what are the responsibilities of Phyllis Tuckwell 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 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.

If you have any concerns or questions, please ask one of the nurses or the doctors for further information.