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Implementation: To be determined by each Service

Change Notification UK National Blood Services No. 33 - 2020

Coronavirus Infection

These changes apply to the Deceased Tissue Donor Selection Guidelines

Please update the current Coronavirus Infection topic:

Includes SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome)
MERS (Middle Eastern Respiratory Syndrome)
COVID-19 (due to infection with SARS-CoV-2 virus, previously known as Novel Coronavirus or 2019-nCoV).

Definition **Confirmed Infection:** If a diagnostic test has been performed and is positive, this constitutes a confirmed infection.

Suspected Infection: Compatible symptoms as per UK GOV definition [given below](#) and who has not been tested ~~in community~~ or is awaiting test result. ~~in hospital. Case definitions for inpatients and community cases currently in use can be accessed at the UK Government website [here](#) and [here](#)~~

Symptoms of coronavirus infection: The most common symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) infection are:

- Recent onset of a new, continuous cough
- High temperature
- Loss of, or a change in, normal sense of taste or smell

Recovery from Coronavirus symptoms:

In line with Public Health England advice, donors can be considered to have recovered if they are well and free of fever and respiratory symptoms. Some individuals may have a ~~persistent~~ cough or ~~reduced sense of smell or taste~~ for some weeks after resolution of their infection, ~~but can be considered as recovered for the purposes of tissue and cell donation.~~

Note See 'Additional Information' section for European Centre for Disease Control (ECDC) guidance on asymptomatic donors living or returning from areas of sustained community transmission.

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1. Person with confirmed or suspected Coronavirus infection

Obligatory **Must not donate if:**

- a. **Less than 14 28 days** since resolution of symptoms due to confirmed coronavirus infection.
- b. Awaiting test results for suspected coronavirus infection.

Discretionary

- a. Confirmed **symptomatic** infection – if **more than 14 28 days** have passed since resolution of symptoms, accept.
- b. Confirmed infection following diagnostic test without clinical symptoms - if **more than 28 days** have passed since most recent confirmed diagnostic test, accept.
- c. Suspected infection:
 - If testing was not performed, and if **more than 28 days** after resolution of symptoms, accept.
 - If testing was performed, and coronavirus infection has been ruled out as a clinical diagnosis, see [Infection – Acute entry](#).

~~bd.~~ For respiratory **symptoms**/failure not related to ~~viral~~ infection, or where ~~COVID-19~~ Coronavirus Infection was ruled out as a clinical diagnosis following testing, and if the underlying cause does not otherwise contradict donation, accept.

See 'Additional Information' section below.

2. Contact with a confirmed or suspected case of Coronavirus infection

Obligatory **Must not donate if:**

Less than 14 days from the first day of contact with an individual with a confirmed or suspected infection.

Discretionary

- (a) If **more than 14 days** since the first day of contact with an individual with a confirmed or suspected infection, and the donor remained well with no symptoms of Coronavirus infection, accept.
- (b) If **less than 14 days** and the donor remained well, with no symptoms of Coronavirus infection, the donor may be accepted with individual risk assessment

Donors **without** any **respiratory** symptoms of coronavirus infection, or **who are** not suspected to have, and have not been tested for COVID-19 infection, **and** who were in intensive care units with **other** patients ~~who had been tested for~~ awaiting test results for suspected COVID-19 infection, and **where these other patients were** subsequently moved to isolation facilities following confirmation of infection, may be accepted subject to individual risk assessment.

See 'Additional Information' section below.

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Additional Information

Common coronaviruses cause colds and respiratory tract infections but are not considered a risk for tissue transplant recipients. Since 2002 there have been outbreaks in humans of new strains of coronavirus, associated with severe pulmonary infections and mortality rates of 10-35% e.g. SARS and MERS.

COVID-19 is an illness characterised by respiratory symptoms, including coughing and breathlessness, and fever. It is caused by infection with a newly identified Coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2. Its full pathogenesis remains unknown but individuals with certain underlying chronic conditions, the elderly and immunocompromised individuals are at risk of more severe disease.

Some persons with coronavirus infection may be asymptomatic. It is possible that they may have undergone testing for occupational health reasons (for example).

ECDC guidance on SARS-CoV-2 suggests that tissues should only be collected from deceased donors (without symptoms or diagnosis of COVID-19) who have lived and visited in areas of sustained community transmission if the donor has been tested with respiratory swabs and found negative within 72 hours prior to donation (ie: retrieval) **OR** unless the donated tissue will undergo processing that the Tissue Establishment consider will effectively eliminate/inactivate any coronavirus that *may* be present in the donated tissues.

Deceased tissue donors may have been subject to respiratory swab testing either on admission to hospital, or as organ donors. All organ donors are tested for SARS-CoV-2 on respiratory samples prior to donation. It is important to ascertain if the donor has been tested negative before proceeding with retrieval of tissues. If the donor has not been tested, ECDC guidance given above should be applied, depending on tissues donated.

There is no evidence at present that coronaviruses can be transmitted by tissue/ cell transplantation and therefore these measures are considered to be precautionary.

Reason for Change

~~This entry has been rewritten to take account of changes in the UK response to the 2020 COVID-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic. This entry replaces the previous entry.~~ The deferral after confirmed Coronavirus infection, or donors with suspected infections who have not been tested, has been increased to 28 days. Additional guidance for suspected infections added. ECDC guidance relating to screening of asymptomatic donors in areas of sustained transmission added.

SmacLennan

Dr Sheila MacLennan

Professional Director - Joint UKBTS Professional Advisory Committee

☎ Direct Dial: (0113) 820 8638

✉ sheila.maclennan@nhsbt.nhs.uk