

# EASY READ PATIENT INFORMATION

## HAVING A BLOOD TRANSFUSION

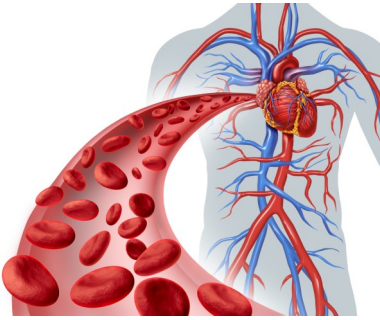


**Gwasanaeth Gwaed Cymru  
Welsh Blood Service**

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We all need enough blood in our bodies to be healthy. Adults have about 8 pints of blood.



Blood carries food and oxygen around our body in tubes called blood vessels and veins. This keeps our body healthy.



Sometimes we lose a small amount of blood. For example because of a nose bleed.

It is safe to lose a small amount of blood because our bodies can replace it.

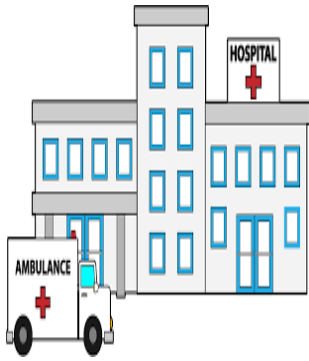


But there are times when we might lose a lot of blood.

For example:

- ◆ after an operation
- ◆ after having a baby
- ◆ after a bad accident





If we lose too much blood then our bodies can't replace it and this can be dangerous.

A blood transfusion is one way of replacing the blood we have lost. It can save our lives.

Blood transfusions are done in hospital or a clinic.



You might also need a blood transfusion if your blood is not as healthy as it should be, for example you may have:

- ◆ A blood disorder or
- ◆ A disease or
- ◆ You are having a treatment like chemotherapy.



The doctor or nurse will explain to you why you need a blood transfusion.

If they don't do this it is okay to ask them why you need one.

If you want a family member or support worker with you that is okay.



You may be able to have a treatment other than a blood transfusion. If you want to know more about possible alternative treatments ask your doctor or nurse.

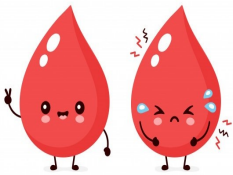


The doctor can't give you a transfusion without you agreeing.

You might be asked to sign your name on a form to say that you agree to a blood transfusion.



It is important that if you, your family member or support worker have any worries or questions you ask the doctor or nurse.



Before the transfusion the doctor or nurse will take a small sample of your blood to check your blood type. This will be sent to a lab for testing.



The doctor or nurse will make sure that you are given blood from a blood donor with the same blood group as you.

### BLOOD DONOR



If you need a blood transfusion you receive blood from someone called a blood donor.

Blood is taken from the blood donor and is stored in a sealed bag.

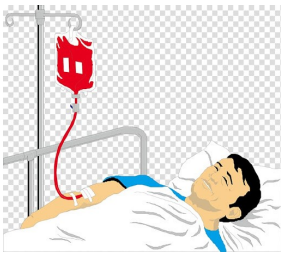


Before the blood transfusion you will be given a wristband with your name and details on it. This makes sure that you will get the right blood for your transfusion.



You might have your blood transfusion

- ◆ sitting in a chair or



- ◆ lying on a bed.



The doctor or nurse will put a small needle in your arm or in the back of your hand. This needle is called a cannula.

You might feel a sharp scratch when the needle goes in.



If you are worried about this, you can ask the doctor for some numbing cream. This cream goes on your arm or on the back of your hand and helps stop pain from the needle.



The bag of donated blood (your transfusion) is connected to a thin plastic tube.

The plastic tube is attached to the needle in your arm or hand.

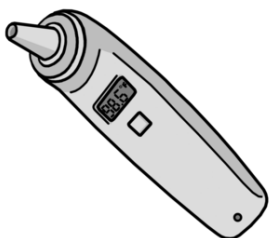


The blood will flow slowly from the bag into the plastic tube and through the needle into one of your veins in your arm.

This shouldn't hurt. If it does tell the nurse straight away.



It can take up to 4 hours for one bag of blood to enter your body. Sometimes you might need more than 1 bag of blood.



The nurses will keep checking on you when you are having your blood transfusion.

They will take your temperature and blood pressure.



If at any time you feel unwell and get:

- ♦ very hot or



- ♦ very cold or



- ♦ have a rash

Then let the doctor or nurse know straight away.



After your blood transfusion you may be able to go home on the same day. The doctor or nurse will tell you how to look after yourself when you go home.



Sometimes after your blood transfusion you may need to stay in hospital to get better. The doctor or nurse will explain this to you.



It is important that if you, your family member or support worker have any questions at all then you ask the nurse or doctor.

The Welsh Blood Service would like to acknowledge the following contributors:

- Vale People First Active Communities Team, with special thanks to Alison Kendrick
- Cardiff People First



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