Blood Products Information

This is information about transfusions of blood products. **All blood that is to be transfused is tested for blood type, compatibility with the recipient and for infections.** Except in emergencies, giving a transfusion requires a written consent.

Blood transfusions are often given as packed red blood cells. This means the other parts of the blood have been taken out. Blood may be needed to treat severe anemia or bleeding. Other blood products include plasma, platelets, immune globulin, and cryoprecipitate. Blood for transfusion is mostly donated by volunteers. The Blood donors are carefully screened for risk factors that could cause disease. Donors are all tested for infections that could be transmitted by blood.

The blood product supply today is the safest it has ever been. Some risks do remain.

- A minor reaction with fever, chills, or rash happens in about 1% of blood product transfusions.
- Life-threatening reactions occur in less than one in a million transfusions.
- Infection with germs (*bacteria*), viruses or parasites like malaria can still happen. The risk is very low.
- Hepatitis B occurs in about 1 case in 150,000 transfusions.
- Hepatitis C is seen once in 500,000.
- HIV is transmitted less than once every million transfusions.

When you receive a transfusion of packed red blood cells, your blood is tested for blood group and Rh type. Your blood is also screened for antibodies that could cause a serious reaction. A cross-match test is done to make sure the blood is safe to give.

Talk with your caregiver if you have any concerns about receiving a transfusion of blood products. Make sure your questions are answered.

Transfusions are not given if your caregiver feels the risk is greater than the need.

Document Released: 12/18/2006 Document Re-Released: 01/09/2011
ExitCare® Patient Information ©2011 ExitCare, LLC.