

Blood Transfusion

A blood transfusion is a procedure where you receive blood through an intravenous cannula (IV) inserted into a vein.

Blood contains red cells which are essential for carrying oxygen around the body. A blood transfusion may be given because of a shortage of red blood cells in the blood (anaemia), either because the body is not making enough of them, or because of blood loss. Sometimes the bone marrow, which produces blood cells, doesn't work properly. The bone marrow can be affected by chemotherapy or diseases. In some cases anaemia can be treated with medicines but in other cases, a blood transfusion may be the best treatment.

Transfusion does not just refer to blood – often other blood products are used. These include:

- fresh blood components, such as red blood cells, platelets, fresh frozen plasma or cryoprecipitate
- plasma-derivatives such as albumin, immunoglobulins and clotting factors

A blood transfusion can be lifesaving or significantly improve quality of life.

Australia has one of the safest blood supplies in the world, however, as with all medical procedures, a blood transfusion is not completely free from risk.

Our patients receive blood and blood product transfusions appropriately and safely.

Risks of transfusion include:

Allergic reaction to the blood- the blood is carefully matched to your blood and allergic reactions are unlikely

Infections –Australia's blood is carefully screened prior to transfusion and infection is unlikely

Fluid overload- we will give you a diuretic to ensure that does not happen

Adapted from Healthscope