

Purpose of this procedure:

This procedure outlines the information that should be shared with individuals to enable potential recipients of blood components to make an informed choice. It also outlines the expected nature of the decision to transfuse which should be shared between recipient and clinician. Sources of patient information are described.

This procedure should be read in conjunction with these complementary Blood Transfusion Procedures:

- [Decision to transfuse](#)
- [Consent for transfusion](#)
- [Written authorisation to transfuse a blood component](#)

The Procedure:

Every patient has the right to be treated with respect and have their concerns addressed.

Clinical practitioners have a professional duty to ensure that they have adequate knowledge of, or access to information on, transfusion-related issues.

Standardised information on risks and benefits of transfusion (see Patient Information Leaflets section below) should be available to any patient considering a transfusion. It should also be available to patients where a transfusion has been given in an emergency, after the event.

The information should be accessible and, where necessary, translated. Information sometimes needs to be provided in a different way to ensure full understanding e.g. delivering information at a slower rate or repeating important points. The [NHS Lothian Interpretation and Translation Policy](#) provides guidance on interpretation and translation support and can be accessed via the NHS Lothian Policy Online platform.

The patient must be provided with information about the following issues to guide shared decision making. Patients should be encouraged to ask questions.

- The reason for transfusion of the blood component/s
- The risks and benefits of transfusion
- The transfusion process
- Any transfusion needs specific to the patient

- Any alternatives that are available
- That the patient has the option to refuse
- The patient will no longer be eligible to donate blood

To document understanding it is good practice to ask the patient to repeat the information that they been given in their own words. The 'teach-back' approach to ensure that the patient has understood the information provided is encouraged. The teach-back method allows you to better assess your patient's understanding of their clinical condition and plan of care. It allows you to uncover and clarify any misunderstandings your patient may have. It also helps the clinician and patient engage in a more collaborative relationship.

Where pre-transfusion discussion is not possible, clinicians should act in the patient's best interests, taking into account any advance directives where appropriate. The reason for transfusion should be discussed retrospectively, a patient information leaflet offered and the discussion recorded in the patient's National Transfusion Record. If the patient has a current advance directive, this should be indicated clearly on the transfusion record and the patient's healthcare record.

Patient Information Leaflets

Patient information leaflets published by SNBTS provide standardised information regarding transfusion:

- [Receiving a blood transfusion](#) (suitable for adult recipients and also for parents/carers of babies and children who may require transfusion)
- [Information for patients needing irradiated blood](#)
- [Information for patients with Sickle Cell Disease who may need a transfusion](#)
- [Fetal neonatal alloimmune thrombocytopenia](#)

Hard copies of these leaflets are ordered through PECOS and should be stocked in all relevant transfusing wards and departments throughout NHS Lothian. The content of the leaflets can be viewed at <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/blood-tissues-and-cells/snbts-transfusion-team/national-policies-factsheets-and-patient-information/>

The transfusion information leaflet can also be made available in large print, Braille (English only), audio tape and in some different languages. To obtain leaflets in different formats only please contact nss.equalitydiversity@nhs.scot

Age specific leaflets for children can be arranged upon request: please contact one of the Lothian transfusion practitioners.

Anti-D information for pregnant individuals who are RhD-negative can be obtained from the anti-D manufacturers (CSL Behring or BPL). A SNBTS anti-D patient information leaflet is in development.

Associated materials/references:

[NHS Lothian Blood Transfusion Policy](#)

[NHS Lothian Blood Transfusion Procedures](#), in particular:

- [Decision to transfuse](#)
- [Consent for transfusion](#)
- [Written authorisation to transfuse a blood component](#)