

What happens when I attend the Blood donation session?

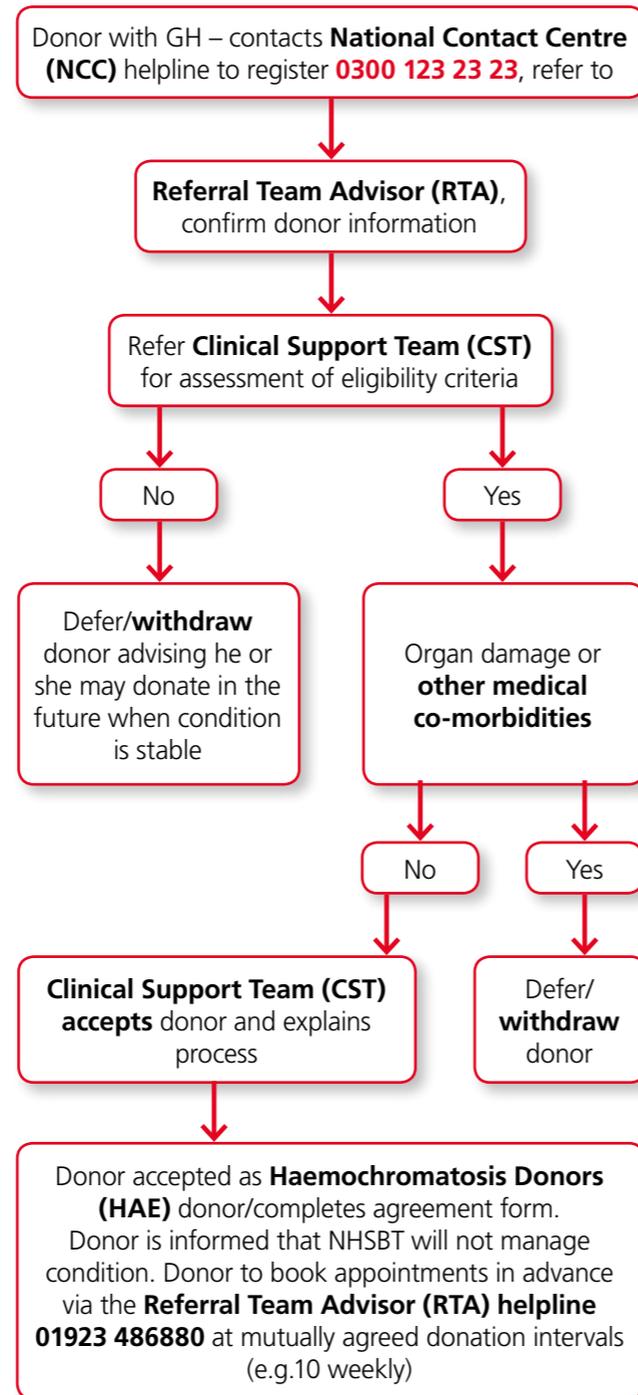
You will be interviewed and asked to complete and sign a Donor Health Check (DHC) questionnaire. If accepted, you will be able to give your donation on the day. On subsequent visits, you will follow a similar procedure as that of other regular donors.

There are a number of reasons why a donor is temporarily deferred, including foreign travel, infection, surgery and medical investigations. All donors are asked about these on the DHC questionnaire each time they come to donate. During this deferral period, we would recommend that you re-book with your specialist team for venesection as and when required.

How do I book further donation appointments?

There are a number of options but currently due to your requirement to donate at regular fixed intervals, it is wise to make bookings in advance via the RTA at fixed donation centres most convenient to you. You may be aware that other blood (non-GH) donors are able to book on the internet on the NHSBT website (www.blood.co.uk) but depending on your blood group, this may not guarantee you a booking time or at the required intervals

Please note at each session there will be a set number of appointment slots, and you may not be able to book at short notice. If this is likely to affect the recommended frequency of blood donation, then please ensure that you have continued access to venesection via your specialist team.



Monitoring of GH

As stated above, it is very important to have continued access to the specialist team looking after your condition in the hospital. NHSBT is unable to monitor iron levels or provide advice as to how often regular blood removal should occur.

In addition, GH may affect many organs (heart, liver, pancreas, skin, joints) and you need to have access to the latest technologies (for example radiological or biochemical) for monitoring and optimal management of your condition.

Finally...

We want to thank you for being a blood donor, and helping to save and improve many lives through the selfless act of blood donation. In addition, we are pleased to be able to help your condition by taking your blood and putting it to good use.

Thank you.

NHS Blood and Transplant

NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT) saves and improves lives by providing a safe, reliable and efficient supply of blood and associated services to the NHS in England. We are the organ donor organisation for the UK and are responsible for matching and allocating donated organs. We rely on thousands of members of the public who voluntarily donate their blood, organs, tissues and stem cells.

Visit nhsbt.nhs.uk Call 0300 123 23 23

Information for Donors with Haemochromatosis



Blood Donation and Genetic Haemochromatosis

The treatment of Genetic Haemochromatosis (GH) involves the removal of body iron stores by regular removal of blood (venesection). Blood donation is an acceptable alternative to venesection, and has the advantage of utilising the blood for NHS patients

I have haemochromatosis, can I donate?

People with genetic haemochromatosis, who have finished intensive venesection (de-ironing phase) and are in the maintenance stage of their treatment, can be accepted as blood donors. However, GH patients must be able to meet all the donor selection criteria and be free from any organ or tissue damage as a result of iron overload. In addition, GH patients are not taking drugs for their condition (oral iron chelators).

Blood donors with GH and the specialist team who manages their condition are advised that they still remain under the care of their specialist for monitoring of the condition and the effects of venesection.

NHSBT collects blood for the benefit of patients and does not provide any form of monitoring or treatment based on individual needs. The frequency of blood donation will be based on safety guidance and predicted requirements of your blood by NHS patients.

What is the donor selection guidance or criteria?

The safety of blood is of paramount importance as it may be given to very vulnerable patients. The donation process, collection and processing of blood for distribution to patients is underpinned by legislation (Blood Safety & Quality Regulations, 2005) and best current practice (donor selection guidance). This ensures that donors are screened and excluded from donation for major illnesses, medication and lifestyle (including sexual behaviour and drug abuse) which may potentially be a transmission risk of blood borne infection (for example HIV, hepatitis or syphilis).

GH patients will therefore be subject to the same screening process as other blood donors, and genetic haemochromatosis does not pose any additional risks. Blood from GH patients is therefore safe for donation and use in patients.

How do I become a blood donor?

If you have haemochromatosis and would like to enrol as a blood donor, please call us on **0300 123 23 23** for registration and advice. Further guidance on blood donation can be found on www.blood.co.uk

What happens next?

The referral team advisor (RTA) will ask you a few questions to ensure that you meet the eligibility criteria for blood donation in general and GH in particular. You will be asked to speak with a member of the clinical support team (CST), to ensure that you understand the process and confirm that you are in the maintenance phase following de-ironing, that you are fit and free from any major illnesses including organ or tissue damage due to iron overload. In addition, that you can confirm that you remain under a specialist who will continue to monitor and treat your condition as required.

On acceptance, please return the agreement letter as soon as possible but you can request to book your appointments in advance by calling the RTA helpline **01923 486880**. The appointments can be booked several months in advance with an agreed donation interval (for example 10 weekly). If you need to change or cannot keep your appointment, please inform the RTA to re-book or retain future appointments.

What are your age limits?

All first time blood donors must be between the ages of 17 and their 66th birthday. If you are between 66 and 70, then you must have given blood (or had a venesection) successfully and without feeling unwell at least once before in the past. If you are over 70 then you may donate as long as you have donated blood (or been venesected) successfully and without feeling unwell in the last 2 years. So, if you are over 66 please let us know the date you had your last venesection or donated blood.

How often can I donate blood?

NHSBT Blood donors may routinely donate at a minimum interval of 12 weeks. To ensure donor safety, our computer systems are set so that donors may donate no more frequently than this. Many donors with haemochromatosis, are currently donating at 12 weekly intervals or longer. However, if you require more frequent donation, then we are happy to accommodate this by special arrangement but you will not be able to donate more frequently than six weekly and this includes any intervening venesection. NHSBT are being driven by demand from patients, and rather than collect and waste your blood, we aim to only collect your blood if it is reliably predicted that it will be required and used by patients.