

RE: COVID-19 and Transfusion- NBTC correspondence to hospitals 11.3.20

There are of course considerable challenges in planning around COVID-19 with a rapidly evolving situation. NHS Blood and Transplant will continue to work closely with hospitals and will provide increased ongoing visibility of stock levels.

It is essential that within hospitals we ensure appropriate use of blood and components to avoid undue pressures on the blood supply. We would also urge hospitals to have ongoing preparedness with awareness of relevant national guidance as follows:
(<https://www.transfusionguidelines.org/uk-transfusion-committees/national-blood-transfusion-committee/responses-and-recommendations>)

Emergency Blood Management Plan: It is recommended that each hospital should establish as part of their overall emergency planning, an Emergency Blood Management group with representation from the Medical Director, operational and risk management, key clinical users and the Hospital Transfusion Team. The responsibility of the group is to provide strategic guidance and formulate arrangements to manage the appropriate use of blood as part of each hospital's emergency plans. The plan is structured to provide a framework of actions for NHSBT and hospitals at three phases as follows:

- Green: Normal circumstances where supply meets demand.
- Amber: Reduced availability of blood for a short or prolonged period
- Red: Severe, prolonged shortages.

More details can be found in the NBTC Red Cell Shortages Plan 2016 and the updated platelet shortages plan 2019. There is also updated Emergency Preparedness, Resilience and Response guidance for Hospital Transfusion Teams (2019).

Group O D Negative Blood: The NBTC has updated guidance on appropriate use and stockholding of Group O D Negative Blood (2019) and it is essential that we work together collectively to minimise pressures on this resource.
(<https://www.transfusionguidelines.org/document-library/documents/nbtc-appropriate-use-of-group-o-d-negative-red-cells-final-pdf>)

Blood sample handling

In relation to blood grouping and serological testing please note there is guidance about sample handling from Public Health England available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-guidance-for-clinical-diagnostic-laboratories/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-handling-and-processing-of-laboratory-specimens>. The advice on sample handling provided enables blood grouping, antibody screening and provision of compatible blood within hospitals and this will support the use of group specific blood. A site specific risk assessment may be required for more complex testing.



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