



Haemochromatosis and blood donation

Donor information

"It's so much easier to manage"

Adrian Gill of Huddersfield was diagnosed with genetic haemochromatosis when he was 33 and in 2013 he started donating blood to manage his condition.

"It seemed wasteful that my blood was simply being thrown away, so I enquired about donating my blood. Not only can my blood be put to good use, but I find donating it much easier too. With the hospital appointments, I was restricted to weekdays in work hours.

"Because of my condition, I can donate every six weeks and this allows me to manage my iron levels well".

People with genetic haemochromatosis may be able to enrol as new blood donors above the usual recruitment age range. To find out for certain, call our referral team on **0300 123 23 23**.

NHS Blood and Transplant 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.

For more information:

Call **0300 123 23 23**

Email **enquiries@nhsbt.nhs.uk**



When giving blood is just what the doctor ordered!

Genetic haemochromatosis is one of the most common genetic disorders, affecting around 1 in 150 people in England. If left untreated, it can cause iron levels in the blood to build up over time which may damage organs and joints.

The main treatment is taking blood. When iron levels are very high, patients may have to undergo this as often as once a week, called the 'induction phase'. Following this, when levels have fallen, patients enter a 'maintenance phase'.

It is when patients with haemochromatosis are nearing the end of the induction phase or are in the maintenance phase that they may be able to become blood donors and save their blood from being thrown away.

Why we need blood

Giving blood saves lives. It can be used as a lifeline in emergencies and for people who need long-term treatments. The blood and its components are used to treat patients with many different medical conditions, such as anaemia, cancer, blood disorders and those having surgery.

To meet demand, we need:

Nearly

400

new donors a day



Around

135,000

new donors a year to replace those who can no longer donate



30,000

new donors with priority blood types such as O negative each year



Can I be a blood donor with genetic haemochromatosis?

People with genetic haemochromatosis are very welcome to donate blood when they are having their iron levels regularly monitored by their GP or specialist team, and they are generally fit and well, have no organ damage and meet all of our other criteria for donating.

To find out for certain, call our referral team on **0300 123 23 23** and we will be able to take you through the process and discuss whether blood donation is right for you. We suggest that you contact us once you have been told that donating at an interval of six weeks or more will be suitable for you.

Please remember this is just a donation service, iron monitoring and advice on the frequency of donation would still be carried out by your own doctor.