



A guide to...

Advice for patients following a blood transfusion

Patient Information

How to contact us

Haematology

Watford General Hospital

West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust

Vicarage Road, Watford, Hertfordshire. WD18 0HB

If you need this leaflet in another language, large print, Braille or audio version,
please call **01923 217 198** or email **westherts.pals@nhs.net**



Author	Donna Beckford-Smith
Department	Haematology
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Care after your blood transfusion

You may have had the blood transfusion as an inpatient or an outpatient.

Most blood transfusions take place without complications, but adverse reactions can occur occasionally. This leaflet describes how to spot any reaction and what action you should take. Reactions tend to occur within 24 hours of the transfusion but in some cases they happen up to 28 days after your transfusion.

Bleeding from the cannula site

When the nurse removes your intravenous cannula, gentle pressure is applied, and a dressing applied to the wound to reduce the risk of bleeding. This should remain in place overnight and be removed the following morning. If the cannula site starts to bleed after leaving the clinical area, remove the soiled dressing, apply a clean wad of tissue or cotton wool over the wound and press firmly. It may help to elevate the arm and use an icepack, once the bleeding has stopped, apply a clean dressing or plaster. If the bleeding fails to stop, contact the nearest hospital emergency service via the following numbers:

- A&E department, Watford General Hospital: **01923-244366 or 01923-217758**
- Herts Urgent Care Centre, Hemel Hempstead General Hospital: **01442-213141**
- Minor Injuries Unit, St Albans City Hospital: **01727-866122**

Pain and swelling where the cannula was inserted

Pain and swelling near the cannula site may be a sign of bruising. If this occurs, apply an ice pack, and elevate the arm. You should telephone the ward where you received the transfusion for further advice on: _____ .

They may arrange for you to return to the ward for further assessment or suggest you see your own General Practitioner (GP). If the problem occurs out-of-hours, contact your nearest hospital emergency service using the numbers above.

Redness and swelling or discharge around the cannula site

This may be a sign of infection. It is essential you see your GP the same day as you may require antibiotics. If the problem occurs out-of-hours, contact your nearest hospital emergency service via the numbers above.

More severe adverse reactions

The symptoms to look out for include the following:

- Breathlessness/wheezing
- Chest pain
- Swelling of lips/face
- Widespread itchy red rash or wheals
- Fever, hot and clammy
- Shivering/rigors
- Severe back/loin pain

It is essential you seek medical attention urgently by dialling 999 for an ambulance, bring this leaflet with you.

Less severe adverse reactions

Contact your GP if you experience any of the following symptoms:

- Extreme tiredness
- Blood in the urine
- Passing much less, or very dark urine
- Unexpected or unexplained bruising