



Name:	_____
DOB:	_____
MRN:	_____

Information about Blood and Blood Products (to be given to the patient)

What types of blood products may be transfused?

- **Red Blood Cells** transport oxygen from the lungs to your body.
- **Platelets** are small cell structures that prevent bleeding by starting clot formation at the site of injury.
- **Plasma** is the liquid part of the blood that contains factors which help to form a clot.
- **Cryoprecipitate** is made from plasma and is rich in certain clotting factors especially useful in the treatment of certain patients.

When is a transfusion of blood or blood products recommended?

Red cell transfusions may be necessary when:

- Significant blood loss caused by trauma or surgery.
- Conditions in which red blood cells are destroyed in the body (e.g. sickle cell anemia).
- Decreased production of red cells because of various serious illnesses or chemotherapy.

Transfusions of other blood products (platelets, plasma, and cryoprecipitate) are most commonly recommended to treat or prevent bleeding.

What are the risks of blood product transfusions?

The transfusion of blood and blood products is overall, a safe practice due to the exclusive use of volunteer blood donors and comprehensive testing. However, it is not without risk. Such risks include allergic reactions (e.g. hives, itching), fever, volume overload and in very rare circumstances, more severe reactions and/or infectious diseases such as hepatitis and HIV/AIDS. Precautions are taken by the transfusion service in screening donors and matching blood for transfusion which further minimizes but does not eliminate those risks.

What are my transfusion options?

In general, the following options relate primarily to the transfusion of red cells. A discussion should be had between the provider and the patient regarding these options.

- **Blood donated by a voluntary community donor** (Homologous or Allogeneic Blood).
- **Erythropoietin Stimulating Agents (ESA) with albumin:** Epoetin Alfa (Procrit, Epogen) and Darbopoetin alfa (Aransep) Synthetic proteins that stimulate red blood cell production.
- **Non-blood volume expanders:** Pharmaceutical sterile fluids that are administered intravenously and are made with water, salts, sugars or starch that help maintain the correct amount of fluid in the blood vessels (e.g. lactated Ringer's, sodium chloride, and Normosol).