

Potential Blood Shortages during Pandemic

During a pandemic such as COVID-19 there is the potential to have blood shortages due to reduction in numbers of donors and/or due to illness in collection, processing and testing staff. At the current time the inventory of blood components is adequate for regular transfusion practice but it is important for us to ensure that we use blood as carefully as possible and to follow best practices to delay the development of shortages.

Attached below is a brief summary of best practices for physicians who order blood. It has been reviewed by the National Advisory Committee on Blood and Blood Products.

As conditions change there will be further communications to inform physicians of next steps.

If you require further information please contact your regional Transfusion Safety Officer (available through your local blood bank).



Blood shortages during COVID-19: YOU can make a difference

#1 Follow red blood cell guidelines

For non-bleeding, asymptomatic patients:

- **Transfuse 1 unit at a time with ongoing reassessment**
- **Blood is rarely needed when hemoglobin is > 70g/L**
- Do not transfuse RBCs for iron deficiency

#2 Follow platelet guidelines

- *Prophylactic* platelet transfusion generally not required when platelets $\geq 10 \times 10^9$
- *Therapeutic* platelet transfusion: varies with indication. Follow published guidelines -

#3 Carefully consider frozen plasma (FP)

- FP does not improve mildly elevated INRs (< 1.8) and is not indicated.
- Correction of mildly elevated INRs or PTTs before most procedures is not recommended¹.
- Non-bleeding patients with cirrhosis or end-stage liver disease rarely need FP (including pre-procedure).
- Use PCCs only for reversal of warfarin only when clinically indicated (bleeding or prior to high blood loss *emergency* procedure).

#4 Avoid iatrogenic anemia

Don't perform laboratory blood testing unless clinically indicated or necessary for diagnosis or management.

#5 TXA for Hemorrhage Control

Use tranexamic acid (TXA) early for trauma, TBI, orthopedic, spine and cardiac surgery, and obstetrical hemorrhage

If you feel well, please donate blood: www.blood.ca



1. Choosing Wisely Recommendations - [Transfusion Medicine](#)

2. Blood Easy 4 [guide](#)

3. ¹Society of Interventional Radiology Consensus Guidelines for the [Periprocedural Management of Thrombotic and Bleeding Risk in Patients Undergoing Percutaneous Image-Guided Interventions](#).