

Receiving A Blood Transfusion

Information For Patients



Sylvan N. Goldman Center
Oklahoma Blood Institute

WHY DO I NEED A BLOOD TRANSFUSION?

Your doctor has determined that your medical or surgical condition warrants a blood transfusion. Specific details about why you need blood are best answered by your doctor. A sample of your blood, obtained by inserting a needle into a vein in your arm, will be sent to the lab. An I.D. bracelet will be put on, which uniquely identifies you. The samples drawn will also be labeled with your information. The blood bank in the lab will determine your blood type and find a unit of compatible donated blood. A doctor that specializes in Transfusion Medicine oversees this testing. This testing may be done several days before the transfusion or on the day of transfusion. If you have received a blood transfusion anytime in the past, it is important to tell the doctor or nurse so they can alert the blood bank. Depending on what type of blood product you are receiving, a transfusion lasts approximately 1-2 hours.

WHAT HAPPENS DURING THE TRANSFUSION?

A needle will be inserted into a vein in your arm with I.V. tubing attached; first saline will be started, then the blood. Before starting the transfusion, a nurse or doctor will check your ID bracelet to properly identify you and the unit of blood sent by the blood bank. A nurse will monitor your blood pressure, temperature, and