

Testing Blood Information for Donors



GIVE BLOOD

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for volunteering to give blood. In blood transfusion, safety is paramount. The Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service (SNBTS) carries out a range of tests on your blood to ensure it is as safe as possible for the person who receives it. This leaflet explains more about these tests, and why they are important.

TESTING BLOOD DONORS

Testing is vital, as some infections can be passed onto patients through blood transfusion. It is not possible to test for everything. That is why our medical selection process is so rigorous, and why we ask so many questions on the donor health check questionnaire.

WHAT WILL MY DONATION BE TESTED FOR?

Your donation will be tested and ready for patients within 24 hours.

Certain tests are performed on every donation, no matter how many times you have given blood. These are tests for:

- HIV/AIDS
- Hepatitis B
- Hepatitis C
- HTLV (a virus carried in the blood) and
- Syphilis.

If your blood gives a confirmed positive result for any of these infections you will be asked to see us again for further tests and advice. A confirmed positive test means that your donation will not be used and you would not be able to give blood in future.

Some tests are only necessary if you have lived or travelled in areas where certain tropical infections, e.g. Malaria, are common. In this case, a donation will not be taken until a blood sample has been tested and shown to be negative.

The range of blood tests carried out by SNBTS is under regular review and other tests may be introduced in the future. For example, it is likely that a test for variant Creutzfeldt Jakob Disease (vCJD) will be introduced once a suitable test becomes available.

In addition we freeze a small sample of your blood and retain it for 30 years. This is done in case it becomes necessary to carry out additional tests at a later date.

FALSE ALARMS IN OUR TESTS

WHAT ARE FALSE ALARMS IN OUR TESTS?

Every day we test thousands of blood donations for infections that can be transmitted via blood.

Occasionally, these automated, routine-screening tests can give false alarms (known as reactions).

Please be reassured, these false reactions do not have a bearing on your health or the safety of your blood donation.

We hope that the following will answer any questions that you might have should this happen to you.

False reactions occur with all laboratory tests, and a small proportion of blood donations will 'react' no matter which test we use. When this occurs we have set procedures which we must follow.

False reactions are often temporary findings and may occur following:

- A recent cold or 'flu', which can cause antibodies to develop that react with the testing chemicals
- A change to a new manufacturer or a new batch of tests

HOW CAN WE BE SURE THAT THE REACTIONS ARE FALSE?

When we see a reaction in our tests we carry out additional, more detailed, testing on the same sample to clarify the findings. If these tests are negative we can be confident that the reactions are false and are due to technical problems only.

WHAT DO WE DO WHEN WE SEE A FALSE REACTION?

False reactions have no implications for your health or the safety of the blood. However, our regulations will not allow us to send blood to hospitals unless the initial screening tests are negative, even when we obtain negative results in our additional tests.

The regulations also insist that we must repeat the tests after allowing sufficient time (usually a few months) for the reaction to disappear. To carry out the repeat tests and to avoid wasting blood, we will arrange to take a small blood sample, rather than a full donation, when you next attend. We will then inform you of the test results as soon as possible.

We have fully trained staff to care for you. If you need any help, contact us on **0845 30 17 2 70.**

If you would like more details, or need to contact us please call us on 0845 30 17 2 70.

Alternatively please contact your local Donor Centre, details below:

North of Scotland

Inverness Blood Donor Centre, Raigmore Hospital
Inverness IV2 3UJ Tel: 01463 705 315

North East of Scotland

Aberdeen Blood Donor Centre, Foresterhill Road
Aberdeen AB25 2ZW Tel: 01224 685 685

South East of Scotland

Edinburgh Blood Donor Centre, 41 Lauriston Place
Edinburgh EH3 9HB Tel: 0131 536 5360

East of Scotland

Dundee Blood Donor Centre, Level 8, Ninewells
Hospital, Dundee DD1 9SY Tel: 01382 645 166

Glasgow & West of Scotland

Glasgow Blood Donor Centre, 8 Nelson Mandela
Place, Glasgow G2 1BT Tel: 0141 357 7700

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www.scotblood.co.uk