Refusal of Blood Transfusion

Information for patients

This leaflet can be made available in other formats including large print, CD and Braille and in languages other than English, upon request.

This leaflet tells you about your right to refuse a transfusion of blood or blood products as part of your treatment.

Can anyone refuse a blood transfusion?

Yes. We want to be sure we treat every patient in a way which recognises his or her individual choices or religious beliefs.

What should I do if I am to have a planned admission to hospital?

Before you are admitted to hospital you will usually be invited to attend a pre-assessment clinic where you will be seen by a nurse or doctor.

You should make him or her aware of your request for no blood or blood products to be used as part of your treatment. It is very important you tell hospital staff as soon as possible so they can plan your treatment. Please do this in writing and ask for it to be included in your medical notes.

If you are one of Jehovah’s Witnesses you should be carrying an Advance Decision Document (sometimes known as a “no blood card”). Let your nurse or doctor see this to confirm you have put your wishes in writing. It is important to give this to your doctor or nurse so that it can be copied and included in your healthcare records.

How will staff react to my decision to refuse a blood transfusion or blood products?

Your doctor will discuss the possible risks with you, if any, of treating you without using blood products. You will need to decide if you are willing to accept these risks.

Your doctor has the right to decide whether he or she is willing to perform surgery under these circumstances. In this case you may need to ask for a referral to a surgeon who is known, in principle, to accept patients who request non-blood management. Your nearest Jehovah’s Witnesses’ Hospital Liaison Committee may be able to help if you need more information.

In all cases hospital staff will respect your right, as an adult patient, to decide what will happen to you during your treatment. In order to make sure your request is followed a special sticker will be attached to your notes to make all staff aware of your wishes.
Refusal of Blood Transfusion

Will I be asked to sign a consent form?

Before any operation or treatment takes place you will be asked to sign a consent form. In signing the form you are agreeing to only the treatment you are willing to accept and which you have discussed with your doctor. This will be written on the consent form before you are asked to sign it.

Consent forms, approved by the NHS, have been specially designed to take account of the individual needs of patients.

What will happen if there is an emergency?

If an emergency arises during your stay in hospital we will still respect your wishes.

What will happen if I am admitted to hospital as an emergency patient?

If you are admitted to hospital in an emergency and we know of your wishes, we will respect and follow them. We have a care pathway plan (plan of care) for dealing with these situations. This care pathway has been developed following discussions with medical professionals and the Jehovah’s Witnesses’ Middlesbrough Hospital Liaison Committee who have the benefit of many years experience.

You can be confident you will receive the best possible care and treatment during your time in hospital.

To help us to respect your wishes you should:

• have informed us in writing and asked that this is kept on your medical record
• carry a ‘no blood card’ with you at all times in case you are unconscious and we cannot identify you.

What if I have other concerns?

If you have questions, which are not answered in this leaflet, or are worried about any aspect of your treatment please talk to one of your doctors or nurses. If they cannot answer your questions they will find someone who can.

For Jehovah’s Witnesses, in addition to your Hospital Liaison Committee, there is a local patient support group which provides pastoral care and help for anyone who requests it; see next page.
Refusal of Blood Transfusion

Further information is available from:

North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust
telephone: 01642 617617

Hospital Liaison Committee for Jehovah’s Witnesses

Patient Support Group
telephone: 07933 861451
24 hours a day, 7 days a week

For urgent assistance
Hospital Liaison Committee
telephone: 07942 919140
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This leaflet has been produced in partnership with patients and carers. All patient leaflets are regularly reviewed, and any suggestions you have as to how it may be improved are extremely valuable. Please write to the Quality Assurance Team, University Hospital of North Tees or email: patientinformation@nth.nhs.uk

Comments, Concerns, Compliments or Complaints

We are continually trying to improve the services we provide.

We want to know what we’re doing well or if there’s anything which we can improve, that’s why the Patient Experience Team is here to help.

Our Patient Experience Team is here to try to resolve your concerns as quickly as possible. If you would like to contact or request a copy of our PET leaflet, please contact:

- telephone: 01642 624719
  Monday – Friday, 9.00 am – 4.00 pm
- Messages can be left on the answering machine and will be picked up throughout the day.

- freephone: 0800 092 0084
- Mobile: (can use text): 0779 506 1883
- Email: patientexperience@nth.nhs.uk

Out of hours if you wish to speak to a senior member of Trust staff, please contact the hospital switchboard who will bleep the appropriate person.

- telephone: 01642 617617
  24 hours a day, 7 days a week

The Patient Experience Team is available to discuss your concerns in person Monday – Friday, 1.30 pm – 4.30 pm. The office is based on the ground floor at the University Hospital of North Tees.

Data Protection and use of patient information

The Trust has developed a Data Protection Policy in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1988 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000. All of our staff respect this policy and confidentiality is adhered to at all times. If you require further information please contact the Information Governance Team.

- telephone: 01642 833551 or email: information.governance@nth.nhs.uk

University Hospital of North Tees, Hardwick, Stockton-on-Tees. TS19 8PE
University Hospital of Hartlepool, Holdforth Road, Hartlepool. TS24 9AH

Telephone: 01642 617617 Fax: 01642 624089