

Blood Transfusion

You may need a blood transfusion if you've lost a lot of blood because of an injury, surgery, or illness.

Transfusions replace the lost blood with more blood or with the parts of blood that your body needs, such as platelets or red blood cells.

A blood transfusion may be done in a hospital, a care center, or, in some cases, at home.

Where does the new blood come from?

It can come from donors, or you can give your own blood and have it ready when you need it.

Donated blood is carefully tested and tracked.

And the blood you get must work with your blood type.

So before the transfusion begins, your care team will check and recheck your blood and the blood you'll get.

When everyone on the care team is sure that the blood is correct and you are the correct person to get it, that's when the transfusion will begin.

Now let's look at how a blood transfusion is done.

An intravenous, or I.V., catheter is put into a vein.

A tube connects your vein to a bag holding the blood.

A pump helps the blood flow slowly into your vein.

During the process, a doctor or nurse will watch for problems.

The whole process can take a few hours.

After the transfusion, keep the I.V. site clean and dry.

And be sure to call your doctor if you have any problems with the site such as pain, redness, swelling, or bleeding.

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Get emergency help right away if you have severe trouble breathing or you pass out.

Call your doctor right away if you have signs of a transfusion reaction.

These signs could include a fever or chills; new or worse breathing problems; or an allergic reaction such as hives, itching, swelling, or a new rash.

And call right away if you feel dizzy or lightheaded, or you feel like you may faint.

Call if you have chest or back pain, or you have blood in your urine or your urine is dark in color.

Blood transfusions are common, safe, and lifesaving.

Knowing what to expect can help you feel confident about getting the care you need.

And remember, you can always call your doctor if you have questions or concerns.