

Patient Fact Sheet

Special Blood Requirement - IgA Deficient

What is IgA deficient blood?

IgA is a protein in your plasma that has an antibody function to protect you. Some people are missing this protein and are not able to produce it and are called IgA deficient. Donors that have been tested and identified as being IgA deficient can provide red blood cells (RBCs), platelets and plasma that is IgA deficient.

Why is IgA deficient blood needed?

If you have suffered repeated, severe allergic or anaphylactic reactions to blood transfusion in the past, use of blood components collected from an IgA deficient donor may be a safer option for your treatment. This is rare but can be quite serious therefore, this precaution is important.

Which patients are at increased risk of severe allergic reactions?

Some patients are at particular risk of severe allergic reactions. Patients who are diagnosed with a deficiency in IgA and who have (through exposure to previous transfusions) formed an antibody against IgA are one of the groups of patients who may experience severe anaphylactic reactions should they require blood transfusion.

Is blood from IgA deficient donors always available?

No. People who are deficient in IgA are quite rare. There are lists of blood donors who are known to be IgA deficient. If needed, these donors will be contacted to come in to provide a donation for patients like you. If such a donor is not available, you may be provided with blood that has undergone a washing process to remove the plasma that contains the IgA protein. It is important that you tell your medical team if you need IgA deficient blood in order to prevent the potential of having another severe reaction.

What if blood is needed in an emergency?

In emergencies, there may not be enough time to arrange for blood from an IgA deficient donor to be provided as it may be more important to provide blood quickly. The medical team treating you will balance these risks and discuss with you.

- * Please carry the attached card with you and show it to your physician or nurse if a blood transfusion is being considered.
- Consider registering with a medical alert program (such as MedicAlert®) to help first responders and emergency physicians in identifying your need for IgA deficient blood components.