Special Blood Requirement - IgA Deficient

What is IgA deficient blood?

IgA is a protein in your plasma that helps your body fight illness. Some people have very low levels, or no IgA in their blood and are determined to be (based on blood tests) IgA deficient. Many people with IgA deficiency have no health issues but some form antibodies to the IgA protein they are missing. These antibodies are called anti-IgA.

Why is IgA deficient blood needed?

If you have experienced repeated, severe allergic reactions to blood transfusion in the past, you may have been tested for IgA deficiency and the presence of anti-IgA. If anti- IgA is detected, IgA deficient blood would be safer, should a blood transfusion be required. Development of antibodies to IgA is rare but, these antibodies can lead to serious transfusion reactions.

Is IgA deficient blood always available?

IgA deficiency is not common. IgA deficient red blood cells, platelets and plasma can be collected from donors who are known to be IgA deficient. If needed, an IgA deficient blood donor can be contacted by Canadian Blood Services to donate blood for a patient with anti-IgA. If an IgA deficient blood donor is not available, red blood cells and or platelets can undergo washing to remove the plasma portion of the blood. It is important that you tell your health care providers that you have anti-IgA antibodies and require IgA deficient blood.

What if blood is needed in an emergency?

In an emergency, there may not be time to find IgA deficient blood or to wash red blood cells or platelets to provide for you; 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® or an equivalent program) to help first responders and emergency physicians in identifying your need for IgA deficient blood components.

ORBCoN
Ontario Regional Blood Coordinating Network