# Patient and Family Information Sheet

This resource answers the following questions:

* What are platelets?
* What are pathogen-reduced platelets?
* Why are pathogen-reduced platelets used?
* What are the differences that you may notice with pathogen-reduced platelets?
* How does a dose of pathogen-reduced platelets compare to a traditional dose of platelets?
* What are the differences for children who get pathogen-reduced platelets?

### What are platelets?

Platelets are a type of blood cell that helps your blood to clot. Your platelets help prevent bleeding or help stop bleeding if you get a cut.

What are pathogen-reduced platelets?

Pathogen-reduced platelets are platelets that have been treated with a chemical and ultraviolet light. A pathogen is a virus, bacteria, or parasite.

Why are pathogen-reduced platelets used?

Pathogen-reduced platelets lower your risk of infection from platelet transfusions. This means that pathogen-reduced platelets are safer for you than platelets that have not been pathogen-reduced.

Pathogen-reduced platelets have been approved by Health Canada and are used regularly in many hospitals in Europe and the United States.

Pathogen Reduced Platelets

What people getting platelet transfusions need to know

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What are the differences that you may notice with pathogen-reduced platelets?

**Plastic Bags**

The plastic bags that hold pathogen-reduced platelets may look scratched and seem more stiff than usual. This is because the usual platelet bags have a chemical called DEHP. The DEHP makes the bags softer and more flexible. However, there is concern that if people come in contact with a large amount of this chemical, it could raise the risk of cancer or birth defects. Canadian Blood Services is working to change all blood bags to this new, safer plastic.

**Amount and Colour of Platelets**

Plasma is the part of blood that is yellow in colour. Most of the plasma has been removed from pathogen-reduced platelets which is why they look less yellow. This change may lower the risk of some transfusion reactions like fevers, chills and hives.

How does a dose of pathogen-reduced platelets compare to a traditional dose of platelets?

In the past, one dose of platelets was made from 4 donors. Now, two doses of pathogen-reduced platelets are made from 7 blood donors (3.5 for each dose). If you have had a transfusion before, you may notice that your platelet count in your blood test result after the new platelets does not go as high because of this smaller dose. This is not a concern; studies have shown that the benefit (lower bleeding risk) of a dose of pathogen-reduced platelets is the same as a traditional dose.

What are the differences for children who get pathogen-reduced platelets?

There is less fluid in each unit of pathogen-reduced platelets so a child will get the benefit of the platelets without the extra fluid.