Autologous Donation

Information for Patients
What is an autologous donation?
Patients planning elective surgery requiring blood transfusion may be able to donate blood for themselves prior to surgery. Giving and receiving your own blood is a way to reduce the risks of contracting an infectious disease or developing other complications that sometimes occur when you receive blood from a volunteer donor.

How to prepare for an autologous donation:
• Ensure you meet the eligibility requirements to donate blood
• Get eight hours of sleep the night before donating
• Avoid exercise / strenuous activity before and immediately after donating
• Eat a healthy meal (low-fat and iron-rich foods) at least two hours before donating
• Drink plenty of non-caffeinated beverages in the days leading up to donation
• Drink at least another eight ounces of non-caffeinated beverages 10 to 30 minutes before donating

What to expect during the procedure:
• Your arm will be prepared prior to beginning the donation
• Materials used during donation are sterile and for single use only
• The actual donation takes about 10 to 15 minutes
• Upon completion of the donation, the needle is removed and/or bandage may be placed on the arm

Donor criteria for an autologous donation:
• Donor must be at least 17 years old—donors under age 17 require parental consent and must be accompanied by a parent/guardian
• Proper photo identification is required to be allowed to donate (e.g school ID with picture and full name, driver’s license and other government-issued ID)
• Weigh at least 110lbs. for normal volume
• Minimum volume is 10 mls per kg of body weight
• Must meet minimum HGB levels of 11.0 g/dL.

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I schedule an autologous donation?
• Donors are required to call the Special Donations Department to schedule the appointment at 847.260.2707

• Donors are asked about their medical history and use of medications including antibiotics
• Autologous donors with a history of heart disease or strokes, or donors taking blood thinners must have physician (Cardiologist/Hematologist) approval to donate

How often can I donate my own blood?
More than 1 unit of blood is usually needed for major surgery or during treatments that require blood transfusion. Because blood can be stored for only 42 days, you and your doctor must plan ahead (4-6 weeks) so that there will be enough time to donate the needed number of units. Most donors can give as often as once a week, but donations must be discontinued at least a week before surgery. Your doctor will discuss your recommended schedule based on your health history and the anticipated amount of blood needed for your procedure.

What should I do if I’m feeling ill on the day of my appointment or currently taking an antibiotic?
Please call the Medical Help Desk at 800.310.9556 as soon as possible to determine if a donation can still take place.

Will the blood I donate meet all my transfusion needs?
The autologous units you donate will be stored for your surgery. However, blood components other than whole blood or packed cells, such as plasma and platelets, are also sometimes used. Additionally, it is possible that you will need more packed cells than the autologous units you donated. When blood components or additional packed cells are needed they will be obtained from the community blood supply, which are carefully screened and extensively tested for infectious diseases.

Will my blood be tested for diseases?
• Yes, autologous donations are tested per current FDA guidelines
• If necessary copies of test results will be sent to you and your doctor

How do I know I will receive my own blood?
We use a unique system of identification and tagging of the units of blood with patient name, name of surgery and the name of the hospital. This ensures that we have provided the best assurance that you will receive your own blood.