



The Johns Hopkins Hospital Patient Information

Original Date
Your Department:
Sickle Cell Infusion
Center
Date 4/19/2017

Blood Transfusions for Patients with Sickle Cell Disease

Revised/ Reviewed

<p>Why I am I receiving a blood transfusion?</p>	<p>Blood transfusions are given in order to suppress the amount of "sickled" blood in your body. This blood is what causes the complications and pain associated with your sickle cell disease. The goal of the transfusion is to decrease the amount of sickle cell blood in your body by giving you blood from a blood donor. This will reduce the amount of daily pain, crises you have, and also severe complications of the disease. Our goal is to suppress the amount of sickle cell blood to less than 30%.</p>
<p>What to expect when receiving a blood transfusion?</p>	<p>You will come in monthly for blood transfusions into the Sickle Cell Infusion Center. If you go longer than 1 month, your amount of sickled blood will increase and you will have more pain and more complications of the disease. The blood only lasts about 30 days in your system, and then your sickle cell blood increases causing more pain and complications.</p> <p>You may also receive pre-medications prior to receiving the transfusion with medications such as Tylenol and or Benadryl. This prevents allergic reactions that may occur during the transfusion. Please let your nurse or your provider know if you have any itching, hives, fevers or chills during the transfusion. Your nurse or technician will check your vital signs frequently to monitor for these reactions as well.</p>
<p>What do I need to do to?</p>	<p>Reactions to transfusions can occur during the transfusion, and also up to 21 days after the transfusion. It is important to call the Sickle Cell Infusion Center if you start to have increased fatigue, blood in your urine, chest pain, or shortness of breath during that time period if you develop those symptoms.</p>
<p>If I have pain, how will it be controlled if I am receiving a transfusion?</p>	<p>During your blood transfusions, you will be treated with your home oral pain medications. Due to potential reactions that can occur, intravenous (IV) or intramuscular (IM), pain medications will not be prescribed. If given with blood transfusions, potential blood reactions may be masked, and it could be potentially dangerous.</p>
<p>Long Term Considerations for Blood Transfusions</p>	<p>By receiving blood transfusions every month, the goal is to reduce the amount of serious complications that can occur due to your sickle cell disease. The goal is to also decrease chronic daily pain and painful crisis. However monthly transfusions can also cause the amount of iron in your blood to increase. Your iron levels (ferritin level) will be checked once a month to monitor for increases. Your provider may start you on a medication to lower the amount of iron levels in the blood.</p>