Blood Banking (Transfusion Service)—Blood Transfusion Policies and Standard Practices

Kalispell Regional Medical Center maintains a transfusion service providing blood and blood products for routine and emergency situations. A pathologist is available for consultation at all times.

Pretransfusion Testing
Prior to the issuance of blood, the patient’s ABO group and Rh type must be determined, and an antibody screen and crossmatch must be performed. Prior to the issuance of blood products which lack red blood cells (eg, fresh frozen plasma), only the ABO group and Rh type need to be determined.

There are 3 types of requests for pretransfusion testing:

1. CLOT “Clot to Hold, Blood” is ordered when blood products are not anticipated but may become necessary. The specimen is drawn and labeled for potential transfusion; however, no testing is performed. Should blood products be required, allow a minimum of 1 hour for availability.
2. TS “Type and Screen, Blood” consists of an ABO group, Rh type, and antibody screen and can be ordered when the need for crossmatched products is unlikely, but may be required in an unexpected situation. In most cases, an abbreviated crossmatch can be completed within 15 minutes. If the patient has a clinically significant antibody, 2 units of blood will be made available for that patient.
3. PC “Type and Crossmatch” consists of ABO group, Rh type, antibody screen, and crossmatch. This is ordered when crossmatched products must be available immediately. All blood products containing RBCs must be crossmatched (including autologous and directed donor RBCs). Allow a minimum of 1 hour for availability.

Note: Whenever a blood product is required, order only the blood product (ie, PC, FFP, PLT, or CRYO) in the Meditech computer. Any additional testing required for that blood product (crossmatch, etc.) will automatically be added to the order.

A positive antibody screen will automatically initiate antibody identification (with additional charges) to determine the specificity of the antibody detected.

Pretransfusion testing for neonates (younger than 4 months of age) requires an initial determination of ABO group, Rh type, and antibody screen. The antibody screen may be performed on a specimen obtained from the infant (preferred specimen) or from the mother (acceptable alternative). If the antibody screen is negative, group O Rh compatible pediatric RBCs may be transfused without crossmatching for the remainder of the neonatal period. If the antibody screen is positive, the antibody is identified and group O Rh compatible blood will be crossmatched and provided for transfusion.

Request for Transfusion
Written orders from the physician are required to transfuse blood components. Nursing staff may initiate orders on a verbal or standing order from the physician with documentation on patient chart.

Patient Identification
The person drawing the blood specimen must identify the patient in a positive manner at the time of specimen draw. The identification of the patient MUST be verified:

1. Ask the patient to state and spell his or her name. If the patient cannot identify himself or herself, find someone who can positively identify the patient for you.
2. In the hospital setting, check that the patient is wearing an identification band. (Delay drawing specimen until the patient is properly banded by staff.) NEVER use information attached to the chart, wall, or bed to identify a patient.

DO NOT COLLECT A SPECIMEN IF THERE ARE ANY DISCREPANCIES. DO NOT RELY ON CHARTS OR RECORDS ON THE BED OR NEARBY EQUIPMENT AS A SOURCE OF PATIENT IDENTIFICATION.

Specimen Collection
Pretransfusion testing (CLOT “Clot to Hold, Blood”; TS “Type and Screen, Blood”; and PC “Type and Crossmatch”) requires one 6-mL to 7-mL pink or lavender-top (EDTA) tube. Before leaving the bedside, the phlebotomist must label the blood specimen tube(s) with the following information:

• Unique Blood Bank number (found on special Blood Bank identification band)
• The patient’s first and last name
• The emergency identification number if patient’s name is unknown
• Date and time of collection
• Collector’s name initials
• The patient’s hospital identification (admission number, medical record number, or date of birth) is helpful but not required

Handwritten labels or imprinted labels may be used. Information on the label must be identical to that on the hospital identification band and physician order sheet or laboratory test requisition. The above information should be printed legibly on a special Blood Bank identification band, at the patient’s bedside, at the time of specimen draw. Blood Bank identification bands, containing a unique number, are available from the laboratory Blood Bank. The information required for completing the Blood Bank identification band should be obtained by asking the patient to spell his/her first and last name and comparing this information with that which is printed on the patient’s hospital identification bracelet (see “Patient Identification”). Any discrepancies should be resolved before the specimen is drawn. After the specimen is drawn, the top layer of the Blood Bank identification band (which is a label containing the above listed information) should be removed from the band and placed on the specimen tube. The bottom layer of the Blood Bank identification band (which contains an exact image of what was printed on the specimen label) should be checked for clarity and securely attached to the patient’s wrist. **THE IDENTIFICATION BAND MUST REMAIN WITH THE PATIENT.** The specimen should be transported to the Blood Bank as soon as possible.

The Blood Bank identification band must remain attached to the patient’s wrist throughout the transfusion period. A new specimen is required after 3 days unless the patient has pre-admitted.

**Autologous Blood Transfusion**

If the patient is planning elective or nonemergency surgery and is healthy enough to donate blood, they may be able to donate blood for their own use. This is called autologous donation. If patient and physician agree that autologous donation is appropriate, a “Special Collection Order Form” must be completed and submitted to:

American Red Cross
401 Railroad St. W.
Missoula, MT  59802-4109
800-695-7258

The American Red Cross will contact the patient to obtain any further information and schedule an appointment for donation. Preoperative autologous blood is drawn by the American Red Cross at 17 1st Ave East in Kalispell, Montana. Patients may donate 1 unit per week for 5 to 6 weeks. The last donation must be made at least 2 weeks before the anticipated blood use.

Since autologous blood products cannot be transfused to other patients, an additional charge is made to help compensate for the special handling that is required. The autologous donor will be charged for this in addition to costs associated with processing the blood product.

**Directed Donations**

To help meet the need for anticipated blood transfusions, some patients request that family or friends donate blood for them. Donors providing directed donations must meet all the same requirements and be screened and tested in the same manner as other volunteer blood donors. Donation must be made at least 2 weeks before and up to 5 weeks before the anticipated blood use.

The patient’s physician must complete a “Special Collection Order Form” and submit it to:

American Red Cross
401 Railroad St. W.
Missoula, MT  59802-4109
800-695-7258

This form requires the name of the directed donor to be specified. The donor must be type compatible with the intended recipient. The American Red Cross will contact the directed donor to obtain any further information and schedule an appointment for donation. A consent signature will be required at the time of donation.

Special handling (such as irradiation) is required for donated blood from blood relatives and patients bear these costs. Unused donated blood becomes part of the community blood supply.

**Special Blood Products**

Special blood products (irradiated blood, HLA matched platelets, crossmatched platelets) are specially ordered from Great Falls or Portland American Red Cross. Depending on the product, it may take up to 4 days to receive. Special handling or additional testing fees will be an additional charge to the patient.