

Autologous Donation Information

Background

An autologous transfusion is the collection and re-infusion of the patient's own blood. Although considered the safest blood one can receive, autologous blood collection may not be appropriate for all patients. Mature children at least 12 years of age and a minimum of 75 pounds, who have the approval of their physician and the Transfusion Medicine medical director are eligible to donate if they meet all the medical criteria. Autologous donations can provide some or all of the blood needed by the surgical patient. However, autologous donations do not guarantee that the patient will not need additional blood.

Warning

The patient's physician must evaluate the prospective autologous donor for risk factors (e.g. cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease) that may be contraindications to autologous donations. Transfusion Medicine physician assessment of the patient is also required to proceed.

How to participate

1. The patient's physician must complete the Request for Autologous Blood Donation. A parent or legal guardian must then sign the Request. Patients 18 years of age or older may sign for themselves.
2. The patient's physician must evaluate the prospective autologous donor for risk factors that may be contraindications to autologous donations.
3. Patients giving autologous blood should ask their physician to prescribe iron supplements as soon as possible (before their donation) in order to build up their red blood cells. They should continue to take the iron after their donation and through to their surgery.
4. Autologous donors should try and schedule their donation so they have a week to 10 days to recover before their surgery. Donations beyond the first require Transfusion Medicine medical director consultation/approval. Blood can be donated as early as five weeks before surgery.
5. **We recommend donating blood before going to the laboratory for other blood tests.**

Important Information

- Autologous units are held in the blood bank until the blood expires.
- Just as with regular blood donor units, autologous blood units have a slight risk of being lost, damaged, misidentified, or destroyed during shipping, storage, and processing of the blood.
- If products other than autologous units are needed by the patient, blood from the general blood bank supply will be provided at the discretion of your child's physician.
- There is an additional charge, to cover administrative costs that will be added to your child's hospital bill for each unit of autologous blood that is held for your child. Most insurance companies do not cover autologous/directed donations. Check with your insurance company to see if this is a covered service.

How to Schedule

- Once the Request is completed, it should be hand-carried, mailed, or faxed to the Blood Donor Center at 202-476-6526. **Autologous donations cannot be made until the Blood Donor Center receives the completed Request.**
- The Edward J. Miller, Sr., Blood Donor Center is located in room 2700 on the second floor of the main hospital, by the cafeteria. Autologous donors can be scheduled Monday through Friday between 11 am and 2 pm. Contact the Blood Donor Center, 202-476-KIDS (5437), for further information.