



**Information for patients
found to have irregular red
cell antibodies.**

**Including
important
patient
card.**

Information for patients found to have irregular red cell antibodies

You have received this leaflet because a recent sample of your blood has been found to have irregular red cell antibodies present. An antibody card has been provided, which should be carried with you. This leaflet will explain what this means for you.

What are red cell antibodies?

An antibody is a type of protective protein that can be produced by your immune system in response to a foreign material. This could be in response to an infection, vaccination or transfusion of blood.

In your case, an antibody has been produced against an antigen on certain different blood cells – these are called irregular red cell antibodies. These antibodies are not caused by infection or illness. They will not be harmful to your health, but could have significant implications for you if you require blood transfusions in the future, or if you are a female of child bearing age and may become pregnant in the future.

Why have I received an antibody card?

You have received this card because if you need a blood transfusion in the future, the blood you receive should not contain the red blood cell antigen that you have formed an antibody against. You will require specifically matched red blood cells to avoid this antibody reacting with any blood that you receive if you need a blood transfusion.

What do I need to do now?

You should carry this card with you. Your hospital blood bank will make a note of the identified red cell antibody in your records. However, if you are travelling abroad, or admitted to another hospital, this information may not be available to your healthcare team. Therefore, it is advised that you carry the card with you and show it to any healthcare professional providing you with medical care.



Why are red cell antibodies important during pregnancy?

Red cell antibodies may also be produced during pregnancy. This occurs when some of the baby's red blood cells pass across the placenta into the mother's bloodstream during the pregnancy. The time this most often happens is during birth/delivery.

The red cell antibodies will generally not be harmful to a mother's health. However, if the mother has an antibody that will react with a corresponding antigen on the baby's red blood cells, the baby could be at risk of anaemia. This is a condition termed **haemolytic disease of the foetus and newborn (HDFN)**. This condition can cause anaemia in the baby and in severe cases, without treatment, can cause more harm or even death of the baby. Fortunately, such cases are very rare and can usually be prevented. The most common antibody to cause this condition is anti-D. However, other antibodies such as anti-K, anti-c and others are also important.

If you become pregnant, it is important to show this card and information to your midwife and obstetrics team who can guide you further on advice regarding monitoring of the antibody level. This is usually through regular blood tests.

Prior to issuing to the patient, please complete the details on the reverse, either the healthcare team or the patient can then detach the card for the patient to retain. This card must be shown to the patient's medical team before each transfusion.

Tear around serrated edges to detach card

Please note this patient is known to have irregular red cell antibodies.



Please discuss with your local blood bank if transfusion support required.

What do I do if I have lost my card?

Do not worry if you have lost your card. Another card can be sent out by contacting your local healthcare team who will get in touch with your local blood bank.

Where can I find further information?

If you are interested in finding out more about transfusion, you might find the following web sites useful:

- **Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service**
www.scotblood.co.uk
- **NHS Blood & Transplant (England)** www.blood.co.uk
- **British Blood Transfusion Society** www.bbts.org.uk
- **Handbook of Transfusion Medicine**
www.transfusionguidelines.org.uk

Contact Us:

This publication can also be made available in large print, braille (English only), audio tape and in different languages. If you would like further information contact nss.equalitydiversity@nhs.scot

For re-ordering by blood bank staff only: PECOS item no. NATL - 313

Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service

t: **0131 314 5510**

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Name _____
DoB __/__/__
Hospital for enquiries _____

Details of Red cell antibody _____

Date of issue of card __/__/__