

# Outpatient instructions after a transfusion

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Common blood products that are transfused include red blood cells, platelets, plasma and Intravenous Immune Globulin (IVIG).

There is a small risk of having a reaction to a blood product when you have a transfusion. A member of the health care team explains the risks before you sign the consent form.

Most reactions start during the transfusion or may occur a few hours later. Members of the health care team watch you closely when you are having a blood transfusion. When you go home, you need to watch for a possible reaction for the next few hours.

## What you may notice with a transfusion reaction:

- temperature higher than 38.5°C or 101.0°F (by mouth)
- chills (shaking)
- pain in head, chest or back
- rash, hives or itching
- nausea or vomiting
- problems breathing, feeling short of breath
- blood in urine

## What do I do if I have a reaction?

Some reactions you can treat at home. Some reactions need emergency help right away.

## Reactions you can treat at home:

- If you have a fever, headache, chills or shakes, take acetaminophen (Tylenol) unless you are allergic to this or a history of problems with acetaminophen. Follow the directions on the package.
- If you have a rash, hives or itching, take an antihistamine medication such as Benadryl or Reactine. Follow the directions on the package.

If no changes occur within 1 hour of taking medication or you feel worse, contact your health care provider or go to the Emergency Department.

## Go to the Emergency Department:

- If you have any serious problems such as nausea, vomiting, severe backache, problems breathing, shortness of breath or blood in the urine, go to the Emergency Department right away. Do not drive yourself.

### Important...

- If you go to the Emergency Department, bring this paper with you. Tell the health care provider that you think you may be having a reaction to a blood transfusion. They need to see you right away as well as contact the Transfusion Medicine Laboratory.

## For questions or concerns

Make sure you know what to do before you leave the Outpatient Department.

## Resources

[www.transfusionontario.org](http://www.transfusionontario.org)

Intravenous Immune Globulin (IVIG) – Facts for Outpatients

[http://www.transfusionontario.org/media/IVIG%20Toolkit\\_Facts.pdf](http://www.transfusionontario.org/media/IVIG%20Toolkit_Facts.pdf)