Quick Reference Guide: *December 2015*

Obtaining Informed Consent for Blood & Blood Products

Transfusion transmitted infectious risks in Australia:

Agent*	Australian estimate of residual risk 'per unit' (Testing)
HIV	**Less than 1 in 1 million** (antibody/p24Ag & nucleic acid)
Hepatitis C	**Less than 1 in 1 million** (antibody & nucleic acid)
Hepatitis B	**Approximately 1 in 557,000**** (HBsAg & nucleic acid)
HTLV	**Less than 1 in 1 million** (antibody: Human T cell lymphotropic virus 1 & 2)
Malaria	**Less than 1 in 1 million** (antibody)
CMV	**Important consideration** in certain patient groups - see below[#]
Variant CJD	**Possible,** not yet reported in Australia (no testing)

In terms of infectious risks, Australia has one of the safest blood supplies in the world. Above risks are very small compared to risks of everyday living (see Calman chart below). *HIV, Hepatitis C and HTLV risks are based on Australian Red Cross Blood Service data from 1/1/13 to 31/12/14 calculated using mathematical model(s). **Occult Hepatitis B infection risk estimated on data from 1/1/14 to 16/4/15. For more information & updates refer to Blood Service clinical transfusion website: www.transfusion.com.au/adverse_events/risks/estimates

- [#]Transfusion-transmitted CMV (Cytomegalovirus) infection may lead to severe or fatal disease in immunocompromised patients. CMV seronegative units are indicated for certain patient groups (including neonates & antenatal transfusion in pregnant women). If CMV seronegative units are not available, leucocyte depleted components are considered to offer a high level of safety in preventing CMV transmission, but are not universally believed to be equivalent. For indications & more information consult your transfusion service provider & hospital guidelines.

Reported non-viral serious risks of blood transfusion: (*includes overseas data)

Adverse Reaction		Risk per unit transfused* (unless specified)
Septic reaction (clinically apparent)	Platelets	At least 1 in 75,000
	Red Cells	At least 1 in 500,000
Haemolytic ABO/Rh mismatch		1 in 40,000
Acute haemolytic reaction		1 in 76,000
Fatal haemolytic reaction		1 in 1.8 million
Delayed haemolytic reaction		1 in 2,500 to 11,000
Severe allergic reactions (anaphylaxis)		1 in 20,000 to 50,000
Transfusion-associated circulatory overload		Less than 1% of patients
Transfusion-related acute lung injury (TRALI)		1 in 1,200 to 1 in 190,000
Transfusion-associated graft versus host disease		Rare
Post Transfusion Purpura		Rare

Variable recognition/reporting leads to under estimation. Above info & updates available at www.transfusion.com.au under 'adverse transfusion reactions'.

The CALMAN Chart (Calman 1996) for explaining risk (UK risk per 1 year):

Negligible	< 1:1,000,000 e.g. death from a lightning strike
Minimal	1:100,000 – 1:1,000,000 e.g. death from a train accident
Very low	1:10,000 – 1:100,000 e.g. death from an accident at work
Low	1:1,000 – 1:10,000 e.g. death from a road accident
Moderate	1:100 – 1:1,000 e.g. death from smoking 10 cigarettes per day
High	> 1:100 e.g. transmission of chickenpox to susceptible household contacts

Informed Consent: Blood and Blood Products

Consent is a process – not a piece of paper

Some of the important elements of informed consent:

☐ Explain:

Cause/likelihood of bleeding/low blood count (including any uncertainty)?

Nature of the proposed transfusion therapy – what is involved?

Benefits expected?

Risks – common and rare but serious?

Alternatives – including the risk of doing nothing?

☐ Ask:

Is there anything else you would like to know?

Is there anything you do not understand?

☐ Give written information and use diagrams where appropriate.

☐ Document the consent process – as per hospital/health service policy.

Use a competent interpreter when the patient is not fluent in English.

More Info? Ask your transfusion service provider or visit:
www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/bloodsafe & www.transfusion.com.au (Australian Red Cross Blood Service clinical website)
For interactive and free education see www.bloodsafelearning.org.au
For more information on appropriate transfusion practice see the national Patient Blood Management Guidelines www.blood.gov.au/pbm-guidelines
For a consumer information website see www.mytransfusion.com.au

Australian Red Cross BLOOD SERVICE

Government of South Australia
SA Health