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BLOOD
TRANSFUSION

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Dear Madam, Dear Sir,

This document provides you with useful information for your or your child's blood transfusion.

USEFULNESS OF TRANSFUSION

Transfusion is an indicated treatment if you lack red blood cells, platelets or clotting factors.

- Red blood cells are essential for transporting oxygen to the tissues. Transfusion is necessary if you have severe anaemia.
- Platelets are essential for clot formation in the event of haemorrhage.
- Fresh plasma provides the clotting factors that stop a haemorrhage.

There may be alternatives to blood transfusion in your particular situation; discuss them with your doctor.

BIOLOGICAL TEST BEFORE ANY TRANSFUSION

Before the blood transfusion, two blood tests will determine your blood type to ensure that your blood type and the blood product to be transfused match and that there is no risk of incompatibility.

If you have received blood transfusions in the past, tell your doctor.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS INVOLVED?

Rarely, transfusion reactions may occur. These are mainly fever, hives (skin reaction) or nausea with or without vomiting.

Transfusion safety is a set of measures put in place from the time the blood is donated until the transfusion is administered to the patient. It aims to minimise any risk associated with the administration of blood products.

- **Risks related to blood groups**

The transfusion can give rise to irregular antibodies without any danger to health, apart from blood transfusion or pregnancy. If you develop such irregular antibodies, you should inform your doctor at the time of any future transfusion.

- **Residual risks of contamination**

The risk is extremely low because:

- o donors are rigorously selected after a medical interview,
- o donors are screened systematically for infectious agents that may be transmitted through blood (e.g. HIV, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, Syphilis), using highly sensitive serological and/or molecular biological testing techniques,
- o certain blood products are treated, such as plasmas that receive solvent-detergent treatment or platelet products that receive pathogen reduction treatment.

- **Unknown risks**

Even with the existing preventive measures, there may still be risks. As a result, national surveillance (haemovigilance) has been put in place. Its purpose is to identify and analyse transfusion-related incidents and to ensure a total follow-up from donor to recipient.

