

AUTOLOGOUS DONATION

Information for Patients and Families

Autologous Donation occurs when a patient with an anticipated need for transfusion donates his or her own blood in advance of that need. The patient's blood is kept refrigerated in a sealed plastic container.

Autologous Donation is an option for patients, not a requirement. We hope this information will be helpful if you decide to donate your own blood for an anticipated need.

The blood supply is safer than it has ever been. Any blood transfusion may result in minor side effects, including chills, fever, or hives. Very rarely, serious reactions can occur, including shortness of breath, shock, kidney failure, and even death. In addition, there is a slight risk of acquiring an infectious disease, such as hepatitis, or more remotely, AIDS. Improved donor screening and blood testing procedures have made the nation's blood supply safer than it has ever been.

Autologous donation is not without risk for the donor (patient). Some patients have low red blood cell counts and/or may not replace the collected blood quickly. Sometimes it is better to store your blood in your body rather than in a plastic container in the Blood Bank. Also, most patients who are on antibiotics, have infections, or feel ill should not donate blood.

Not everyone is able to donate their own blood. Autologous donors must have veins large enough for the needle used, a hematocrit (measure of red blood cells) 33% or higher, and be in good general health. Donors must be able to fully extend their arms and must be willing, cooperative, and able to remain still during the procedure. Many people are not able to tolerate donating more than one or two units within several weeks and may feel ill after donating. Some patients need to take an iron supplement to help rebuild their red blood cells.

Autologous blood is not collected at UM Hospital. Blood collection agencies such as the American Red Cross collect autologous blood for our patients and ship it directly to UM Hospital Blood Bank labeled specifically for the intended recipient.

Timing is key. Autologous Blood has a limited shelf life: 35-42 days. Autologous donors should allow 10 days between their last donation and anticipated need.

Collecting a unit of Autologous Blood is more costly than using blood from the volunteer blood supply. In addition to the costs of collecting a unit of blood, autologous donor blood requires separate storage, special tracking, and additional administrative costs. Blood centers collecting autologous blood charge the UM Hospital Blood Bank a fee for autologous blood *in addition* to the cost of providing the blood itself. Some insurance companies do not pay the additional fees associated with these services. **The Patient will be charged a fee** for these services, whether the blood is used by the patient or not. Out-of-area collection centers may charge additional fees for shipping as well. These fees are non-refundable.

To plan for your Autologous Donation:

- **Time your donation** so the blood does not outdate by the date of surgery and so there is enough time between the donation and the surgery for you to fully recover.
- **Contact your physician** to determine how much blood may be needed and to have the physician complete the Physician Request for Autologous Donation Form. An additional form, the American Red Cross Special Collection Order form, is required for some Red Cross autologous donations.
- **Do not send forms directly to the blood center.** Mail or FAX forms to UM Blood Bank for processing. Address: 1500 E. Medical Center Drive – UH2F221 University Hospital – Box 0054 – Ann Arbor, MI 48109-0054. FAX: 734-936-6875.
- **If you have questions,** contact UM Apheresis Procedure Unit (APU) to obtain information and assistance in arranging donation. APU will send the physician order by FAX to the collection center offices. The patient then calls the blood center directly to arrange an appointment for donation.

Please call APU at 734-936-6900 for forms, collection center information, or questions about autologous donation.