



Autologous Donation

Information for Patients and Families

Autologous Donation is when a patient donates blood for himself. The patient donates blood which is kept refrigerated in a sealed plastic container until its transfused back to the patient.

What do I need to know about an autologous donation?

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.

The blood supply is safer than it has ever been.

Any blood transfusion may cause minor side-effects, including chills, fever or hives. Very rarely, serious reactions can occur. These include shortness of breath, shock, kidney failure and even death. In addition, there is a small risk of getting infected with a disease, such as hepatitis, or even 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 be able to 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, patients who take antibiotics, have infections, or feel ill should not donate blood, except in rare cases.

Autologous donation is not always possible for everyone.

Autologous donors must have veins that are large enough for the needle used. They must be in good general health and have enough red blood cells, with a hematocrit (measure of red blood cells) of 33% or higher. Donors must be able to fully extend their arms and must be willing, cooperative, and able to remain still during the procedure. Many people do not 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 the 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 need to 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 these additional fees. **The Patient will be charged a fee** for these services, even if the blood was not used by the patient for any reason. Out-of-area collection centers may charge additional fees for shipping. These fees are non-refundable.

How do I plan for an autologous donation?

- **Time your donation** so the blood does not expire by the date of surgery. You also need to allow enough time between the donation and the surgery for you to fully recover.
- **Contact your doctor** to find out how much blood you may need. Ask your doctor to complete the Physician Request for Autologous Donation Form. Some Red Cross autologous donations require an additional form: the American Red Cross Special Collection Order form.
- **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 the UM Apheresis Procedure Unit (APU) at 734-936-6900 for information and assistance in arranging the 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.

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Reviewer: Terry Downs

Last Revised 12/2015

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