

30 minute | 4 hour rule

What does this mean?

SUMMARY:

- Blood should be commenced as soon as it arrives in the clinical area (after pre-transfusion checks)
- Blood returned to Blood Bank within 30 minutes of issue may be returned to stock
- Blood that has remained in the clinical area for more than 30 minutes **MAY STILL BE TRANSFUSED** to the patient as long as the total transfusion time is **WITHIN 4 HOURS**

Why do you have to return unused blood to blood bank within 30 minutes?

- Returning Red Blood Cells (RBC) within 30mins helps to decrease wastage.
- If RBC are returned to the Blood Bank (BB) within 30mins, they can then be returned to controlled storage in the BB fridge.
- Once they are back in the fridge, they can be re-crossmatched and released to any other patient.
- If you return RBC to the BB after 30mins, BB staff have no option but to discard them.

Can blood that has been left on the ward for >30 minutes be transfused?

YES, you have up to 4 hours to complete a blood transfusion.

- RBC that have been left at room temperature in the clinical area (i.e. hung on an IV pole, sitting in the medication room etc...) may still be transfused provided the transfusion is complete **within 4 hours** from release from the blood bank. *For example: If a unit of RBC is left sitting in the ward for 1 hour, you can still transfuse this unit to your patient, provided that you complete the transfusion within the next 3 hours (i.e. 1 hour + 3 hours = 4 hours total time out of the fridge)*
- You also need to ensure that this administration time complies with the doctor's prescription. Medical staff will usually prescribe that the blood be transfused within a range of time (i.e. 1-3 hours, 2-4 hours).
 - In stable, non-bleeding adult patients, the typical administration duration is:
 - Red cells 60-180 minutes per unit.
 - Platelets 15-30 mins per bag
 - FFP 30 mins per unit
 - Cryoprecipitate 30-60 mins per dose (which is usually 10 bags)
- Remember to perform the PRE-TRANSFUSION CHECK on any blood BEFORE it is connected to the patient.

Does blood have to be transfused within 4 hours?

YES, a transfusion must be completed within 4 hours

WHY?

The risk of bacterial proliferation greatly increases when blood remains at room temperature for >4 hours

References:

ANZSBT Guidelines 2019
Australian Red Cross Lifeblood website
FAQ's – EH intranet >Clinical Services> Blood Matters
EH Blood Administration Practice Guideline



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