BDS20 Administer a transfusion of blood/blood products

About this workforce competence

This workforce competence is about safely administering a transfusion of blood/blood products to an individual who has been identified as requiring this procedure.

This involves confirming pre-transfusion checks have been made to ensure the correct patient receives the correct blood (refer to competence BDS19). It also involves supporting and monitoring the patient throughout the transfusion procedure, identifying and responding promptly to indications of adverse reactions, completing relevant documentation and disposing of used blood bags and other used equipment of completion.

This workforce competence is relevant to anyone required to carry out this activity to support safer blood transfusion by ensuring the correct blood or product is given to the correct patient.

This workforce competence has specific links with the following workforce competences related to transfusion of blood/blood products:

- BDS17 Organise the receipt of blood/blood products for transfusion
- BDS18 Collect blood/blood components for transfusion
- BDS19 Prepare to administer transfusion of blood/blood products to patients
- Obtaining a venous blood sample

Links

This workforce competence has indicative links with the following dimensions and levels within the NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework (October 2004)

Dimension: HWB7 – Interventions and treatment related to the structure and function of physiological and psychological systems.

Level: 4
Origin
This workforce competence has been developed by the National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA), in collaboration with Skills for Health. The NPSA is currently working towards ensuring that the competencies receive endorsement from Skills for Health and are displayed on their website in 2007.

Glossary
This section provides explanations and definitions of the terms used in this workforce competence. In competences it is quite common to find words or phrases used which you will be familiar with but which, in the detail of the competence, may be used in a very particular way.

**Additional protective equipment** includes types of personal protective equipment such as visors and protective eyewear.

**Contaminated** includes items contaminated with body fluids/chemicals.

**Blood transfusion record and/or prescriptions** denotes the term used for the documentation on which the blood transfusion has been ordered/prescribed – this will vary across care settings and environments such as the hospital and community settings.

**Personal protective clothing** includes items such as plastic aprons, gloves – both clean and sterile – footwear, dresses, trousers, shirts and all-in-one trouser suits.

**Safe limits** safe limits for the transfusion of blood should be within specified times of it leaving the fridge – this is no greater than four hours for blood and no greater than 30 minutes for platelets.
Scope
This section provides guidance on possible areas to be covered in this workforce competence.

Adverse reaction/event
This could be due to:
- a) transfusion of incorrect blood product
- b) immunological responses
- c) transfusion of transmittable infection

Methods of identification
This could include:
- a) verbally, by positive verbal identification
- b) using patient’s wristbands or name badges for identifying the individual
- c) labels on the blood or blood product
- d) using other appropriate communication methods such as Makaton

Patient
This could be a:
- a) neonate or infant
- b) child or young person
- c) adult
- d) older person

Relevant member of staff
This includes:
- a) person in charge of the care area
- b) doctor who prescribed the blood transfusion

Remedial action
This could be:
- a) stopping the transfusion
- b) informing a member of staff more able to deal with the situation

Standard precautions and health and safety measures
May include:
- a) hand washing/cleansing before, during and after the procedure
- b) the use of personal protective clothing and additional protective equipment when appropriate
- c) matching patient documentation and labelling on the
blood and/or blood component
d) ensuring correct and complete labelling of blood and/or other products
e) ensuring one unit is removed for one patient at a time (unless that patient is suffering from a massive bleed)
f) disposing of waste including sharps
g) safe moving and handling techniques
h) untoward incident procedures

Vital signs
Includes:
a) blood pressure
b) pulse rate
c) temperature
Performance Criteria

You need to:

1. apply **standard precautions for infection control** and any other relevant **health and safety measures** appropriate when transfusing blood and/or other blood components
2. identify the **patient** requiring the transfusion using appropriate **methods of identification**
3. apply local procedures for identifying unconscious patients, neonates or those who are unable to verbally confirm their identity
4. confirm all pre transfusion checks have been carried out including:
   - patient’s understanding of, and informed consent to, the procedure
   - pre transfusion **vital signs** recorded
   - blood transfusion administration records and prescriptions are available, up to date and legible
   - patent venous access and compatible intravenous fluid
5. complete the **blood transfusion administration record/documentation** accurately and legibly
6. report any discrepancies or omissions you might find to the **relevant member of staff**
7. carry out pre-transfusion checks on the blood pack to ensure the suitability of the blood/product for transfusion including:
   - examining the blood pack for signs of damage, discolouration, haemolysis, leaking or clumping
   - confirming the expiry date has not been exceeded
   - confirming the blood group and donation number on the blood label are identical to the blood group and donation number on the blood or blood product
   - checking the information on the patient’s wristband matches the prescription **and** the information on the blood label
8. sign the prescription to confirm that the patient identification checks have been carried out at the bedside
9. monitor and record the individual’s **vital signs**:
   - 15 minutes after starting each unit of blood/product
   - at appropriate intervals during the transfusion
• on completion of the transfusion
10. administer the blood/blood product to the individual as prescribed:
  • using the correct techniques when connecting blood bags
  • complying to the prescription chart throughout
  • regulating the rate of transfusing each unit/bag within safe limits
11. inspect the cannulation site and lines at regular intervals according to agreed protocols
    and take appropriate action if required
12. promptly identify any adverse reactions to the transfusion and take immediate and
    appropriate remedial action
13. provide support to the patient throughout the procedure
14. record the date and time of the transfusion accurately, legibly and completely including a
    written record of the start time and stop time
15. safely dispose of the blood bag and other equipment used in the transfusion process in
    accordance with current guidelines
Knowledge and understanding

You need to apply:

Legislation, policy and good practice

K1. A factual knowledge of the current European and national legislation, national guidelines and local policies and procedures

K2. A working knowledge of your responsibilities and accountability in relation to the current European and national legislation, national guidelines or procedures

K3. A working knowledge of the importance of obtaining positive confirmation of an individual’s identity and consent before starting the blood transfusion procedure, and effective ways of getting positive identification

K4. A factual knowledge of the importance of working within your own sphere of competence and seeking advice when faced with situations outside your sphere of competence

K5. A working knowledge of the importance of applying standard precautions and the potential consequences of poor practice

K6. A working knowledge of how infection is spread and how its spread may be limited – including how to use or apply the particular infection control measures needed when working with blood

K7. A working knowledge of the importance of only checking blood/blood products for one patient at a time and why this is a safe approach to practice

K8. A working knowledge of the adverse events/patient safety incidents which can arise during the administration of blood and/or other blood products including:
   a) the potential consequences of checking blood for more than one patient at a time
   b) misidentifying individuals at the bedside
   c) incorrectly labelled blood products
   d) being distracted and interrupted during bedside checking
   e) not monitoring an individual during the transfusion

K9. A working knowledge of the process for administering a blood transfusion including:
   a) pre-transfusion checking of the blood or blood product
   b) checking patient identification
   c) pre and post transfusion monitoring
d) recording of the individual’s vital signs

K10. A working knowledge of how and to whom you need to report any adverse event or reaction

Anatomy and physiology

K11. A factual knowledge of blood clotting processes and factors influencing blood clotting

Procedures and techniques

K12. A working knowledge of the blood transfusion administration process
K13. A working knowledge of the patient identification process and the checks that are necessary for confirming that the blood component is labelled correctly
K14. A working knowledge of the factors involved in the procedure which could affect the quality of the blood
K15. A working knowledge of the remedial actions you should take if there are any problems identifying the patient
K16. A working knowledge of the complications and problems that may occur during blood transfusion, how to recognise them and what actions to take

Care and support of the individual

K17. A working knowledge of the contra-indications and changes in behaviour and condition, which indicate that the procedure should be stopped and advice sought
K18. A working knowledge of the concerns which individuals may have in relation to receiving a blood transfusion
K19. A working knowledge of how to prepare an individual for receiving a blood transfusion, including how their personal beliefs and preferences may affect their preparation
K20. A working knowledge of what is likely to cause discomfort to individuals during and after the blood transfusion, and how such discomfort can be minimised
K21. A working knowledge of common adverse reactions/events relating to blood transfusion, how to recognise them and the actions to take if they occur
K22. A working knowledge of the human errors and systems problems which lead to blood transfusion incidents including:
   a) omitting bedside checks
b) poor written and verbal communication

c) time pressure, high workload and distractions/interruptions during tasks

**Reporting, recording and documentation**

K23. A working knowledge of the information that needs to be recorded on the transfusion record and in the patient’s case notes throughout the blood transfusion process

K24. A working knowledge of the importance of keeping accurate and up to date records

K25. A working knowledge of the importance of immediately reporting any issues which are outside your own sphere of competence without delay to the relevant member of staff.