

WHAT IS PREOPERATIVE AUTOLOGOUS DONATION?

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What is Preoperative Autologous blood Donation (PAD)?

Preoperative means before an operation. Autologous means 'from self'. Preoperative autologous blood donation is the collection of a patient's own blood in the lead up to planned surgery, for their own use.

Who needs PAD?

Very few patients need PAD and it is no longer routinely recommended. Some patients have a very rare blood group and the Blood Service may have difficulty finding suitable donors – for these rare patients, PAD may be a good option.

Having my own blood for my operation sounds like a good idea – or is it?

Having your own blood set aside for transfusion gives no medical advantage. Many patients who use PAD develop anaemia (low red cell count) because of the donation, which, ironically, makes them more likely to need a transfusion.

What are the risks associated with PAD?

It is a myth that PAD is risk free. The problems associated with both collecting the blood and giving it back to the patient are:

- dizziness/fainting before, during or following the collection
- pain in the donating arm/bruising at the donation site
- iron loss is unavoidable when giving blood
- increased likelihood of preoperative anaemia as a result of the iron loss from autologous donation.

Why is iron loss or preoperative anaemia a problem?

Iron loss can lead to anaemia and make it more difficult to replace red blood cells lost during surgery. Preoperative anaemia may lead to poorer outcomes after surgery such as longer hospital stays, and even higher rates of mortality (death).

What can go wrong with autologous blood transfusion?

Many of the risks of autologous blood transfusion are the same as allogeneic (donor-donated) blood. These include bacterial contamination and fluid overload. Unfortunately, human error can still result in the wrong blood being given to a patient.



Am I more or less likely to need blood if I donate it before my surgery?

Even though PAD reduces the risks associated with receiving blood from someone else, it increases the overall possibility of needing any transfusion (self- or donor-donated).

If I don't need my blood, can someone else have it?

If an autologous donation is not required by the intended patient, the units must be discarded. PAD units can not be used to transfuse other patients. This results in frequent wastage.

Why was PAD popular?

In the 1980s, health professionals and the public were concerned about the risk of patients acquiring HIV or hepatitis C infections from blood donated by another person (allogeneic blood). Current advanced testing techniques mean that Australia has one of the safest blood supplies in the world.

BLOOD FACT

Apart from rare cases, the Blood Service will no longer collect PAD from 1 July 2014.