ACUTE TRANSFUSION REACTIONS


PATIENT HAS SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS SUGGESTIVE OF POTENTIAL TRANSFUSION REACTION

STOP
the transfusion immediately

Assess: rapid clinical assessment

Check: confirm patient ID band matches blood swing label details

Inspect: visual check of unit for turbidity, clots or abnormal appearance

Talk with the Patient: establish status, inform and comfort

Severe or Life Threatening Events
✓ CALL for urgent medical help and review
✓ INITIATE Resuscitation: ABC
✓ DISCONNECT IV infusion set/unit – do NOT discard/restart
✓ MAINTAIN venous access with saline via NEW infusion set
✓ ADMINISTER IV fluids/O2 if clinically indicated
✓ MONITOR TPR/BP/SpO₂, urine output (q5-15 min)
✓ TREAT according to clinical status/symptoms, noting:
  → ? anaphylaxis/severe allergy; use NZRC Anaphylaxis Guide
  → ? septic shock: use DHB Sepsis Guidelines
  → ? acute haemolysis: maintain BP, force diuresis, alkalise urine
  → ? circulatory overload: diuretics, O₂, positive airway pressure
  → ? TRALI: respiratory support, ask NZBS to start donor review

ALERT: Is haemorrhage a possible cause of the hypotension?
Resuscitate with fluids and consider further transfusion

INFORM your local clinical haematologist or TMS via Blood Bank ASAP or, contact directly if treatment advice needed

Moderate medical staff – seek PROMPT clinical review

✓ All symptoms that are not classified as mild, severe or life threatening
✓ Disconnect IV infusion set/unit – do NOT discard/restart
✓ Replace IV infusion set
✓ Maintain venous access with saline
✓ Treat according to clinical status
✓ Do NOT restart transfusion

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Mild Events
✓ Fever > 38°C and < 1.5°C above baseline with no other symptoms
✓ Localised rash with no other symptoms

Medical Review
? If fever – consider antipyrexial
? If localised rash – consider antihistamine

Management
✓ Consider restarting transfusion at slower rate. Directly observe for first 15 minutes
✓ Increase frequency of monitoring vital signs (TPR/BP/SpO₂) thereafter

INFORM medical staff – seek PROMPT clinical review

✓ DO – ‘Standard ATR investigations’ and undertake ‘Additional Investigations’ as needed (see below)
✓ COMPLETE – NZBS ATR Notification Form (111F009)
✓ SEND – blood unit/IV set, ATR Notification Form and EDTA (pink) sample to BB and other samples to Pathology
✓ RECORD – in clinical notes

Investigations and Reporting

✓ INFORM Haemovigilance to Blood Bank (BB)
✓ Report all mild, moderate and severe ATRs using the NZBS ATR Notification Form
✓ If the event is moderate or severe, remember to include the EDTA (pink) sample, the discontinued unit and blood IV infusion set with the ATR Form (111F009)

Advice on management, further transfusion needs or recurrent reactions should be discussed with the transfusion medicine specialist (TMS) or the clinical haematology consultant.