Directed Donation Information

Children's Hospital Colorado wants to provide the best medical care for your child. All blood collection centers in the United States are regulated by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The FDA controls the ways blood is collected and prepared for transfusion.

Our blood supply comes from donors from the general public who donate out of the goodness of their hearts. Many of our donors have donated to Children's Hospital Colorado for decades. These donations are called **Volunteer Donations**. In contrast, a blood donation given by a person recruited by the patient or the patient’s family is called a **Directed Donation**.

Our number one goal is to provide the safest blood possible for your child. We feel that it is important for you to know that your blood, or a relative’s blood, may not be the safest blood for your child. Many people do not know that there are risks associated with directed donations.

All of our blood donors go through a careful screening process. They answer many questions about their medical history and exposure to certain diseases and behaviors. Every blood donation is required to be tested for infectious diseases.

In our experience, some directed donors feel pressure to donate. Donation should always be voluntary. Some studies have shown that directed donations may be less safe than volunteer donations.

**Here are some medical risks associated with Directed Donation. These problems are more common when the donor is a blood relative.**

1. **Transfusion-Associated Graft-versus-Host-Disease (TA-GVHD) can occur when** white cells from your blood donation try to destroy your child's immune system. This leads to destruction of blood cells and can even cause death.

2. **Transfusion-Associated Acute Lung Injury (TRALI) can happen when a mother donates blood to her child. It is caused by foreign substances that form in the mother's blood during pregnancy. These substances can cause severe lung damage in the child receiving blood and sometimes this process can lead to death.**

3. **Pre-Transplant Sensitization** is important to think about. In this case, if your child received your blood in the past and now needs an organ transplant (examples: bone marrow, kidney) you may not be able to be their organ donor even if you were a match. This is because your cells will now be recognized as “foreign” and antibodies will destroy them. These antibodies can cause your child to reject a transplanted organ.

**What can I do as a parent?** You may qualify for blood donation. If so, please consider donating today as a **Volunteer Donor**. We can mark your donation in a special way so that your blood does not go to your child. Because our patients are smaller, almost every unit collected at TCH can help more than one patient. All blood types are always needed. We appreciate every donation.

**If you have more questions:** If you would like to discuss these medical risks or have them further explained to you, please call the Donor Center at 720-777-5398. We are glad to be of service to you and your family.