

**Northwell Health**  
**Blood Supply and COVID-19**  
**Talking Points**  
**March 14, 2020**

**COVID-19 and Blood Transfusions:**

- To date, there are no documented cases of coronavirus transmission by blood transfusion.
- Donors are deferred based on questions about their health on the day of donation, and the American Red Cross is also deferring donors based on history of recent travel to some countries and/or exposure to confirmed or suspected patients with COVID-19.
- Donors receive post-donation instructions to notify the blood center if they develop symptoms of any infectious disease.

**Additional information:**

**I) Excerpt from the American Red Cross Media Statement on Coronavirus Disease 2019; March 6, 2020:**

“It’s important to emphasize that there is no data or evidence that COVID-19 can be transmitted by blood transfusion, and there have been no reported cases of transmissions for any respiratory virus, including this coronavirus, worldwide. Nonetheless, the American Red Cross has implemented new blood donation deferrals out of an abundance of caution. We are now asking that individuals postpone their donation for 28 days following:

- - Travel to China and its special administrative regions, Hong Kong and Macau, as well as Iran, Italy and South Korea.
- - Diagnosis of COVID-19, contact with a person who has the virus, or is suspected to have it.

**II) Excerpt from interview with Dr. Louis Katz, AABB President; March 6, 2020:**

“...respiratory viruses, in general—including two other dangerous coronaviruses, SARS and Middle East respiratory syndrome—are not known to be transmitted by blood transfusions. There’s no data that suggests that any of these viruses are transmitted by transfusion,” Katz said.

In certain cases, a very sick person might show signs of virus in the blood, but such a person would be obviously ill and not accepted as a donor, said Katz. Transfusion transmission is theoretically possible, but is unlikely based on precedent, he said.”

**III) Excerpt from “4 of your latest coronavirus questions, answered”, CNN Health; March 12, 2020**

Does donated blood get screened for coronavirus?

At least 4.5 million Americans need donated blood every year, but this is the first time novel coronavirus has been a concern in the nation's blood supply.

"Individuals are not at risk of contracting COVID-19 through the blood donation process or via a blood transfusion since respiratory viruses are generally not known to be transmitted by donation or transfusion," said the AABB, formerly the American Association of Blood Banks.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration continues to report that there have been no reported or suspected cases of transfusion-transmitted COVID-19 to date," the group said. "In addition, no cases of transfusion-transmission were ever reported for the other

two coronaviruses that emerged during the past two decades (SARS, the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus, and MERS-CoV, which causes Mideast Respiratory Syndrome)."

The AABB said routine screening measures are already in place to prevent anyone with clinical respiratory infections from donating blood. But there is one big concern involving blood donations and coronavirus: the possibility that fewer people will come out to donate.

"If the outbreak of coronavirus continues to spread, additional challenges may arise, which could potentially reduce the number of eligible donors," the AABB said."

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Respectfully Submitted,

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