

28th January 2016

Dear Hospital Transfusion Teams

Introduction of Hepatitis E Virus (HEV) screened negative components

In October 2015 we wrote to let you know that NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT) is introducing screening for the Hepatitis E Virus (HEV) early this year on selected blood components.

The screening is being introduced following a recommendation from the Advisory Committee on the Safety of Blood, Tissues and Organs (SaBTO) that HEV negative blood components are required for patients undergoing solid organ and allogeneic stem cell transplantation.

Further clarification of the guideline from SaBTO in December 2015 has confirmed that HEV screened blood should be given to potential allogeneic stem cell transplant recipients from 3 months prior to the date of planned transplant and up to 6 months following transplant, or for as long as the patient is immunosuppressed. For patients with acute leukaemia this should be from the time of diagnosis unless a decision is made to not proceed with transplantation. Further information about the timing of use of HEV screened blood in patients undergoing solid organ transplantation will be provided by SaBTO shortly. NHSBT has taken the decision to also provide HEV negative blood components for neonatal patients and for infants up to one year old.

In the interests of these groups of patients, the Department of Health requested that NHSBT implement HEV screening as soon as operationally feasible. The speed required to implement this change has produced challenges for managing potential supply and also operational challenges to ensure systems are correct. We are also aware of the implications of the SaBTO recommendation on hospital laboratories, clinical areas and finances.

In the last few months NHSBT has been working with hospitals to understand the demand for HEV negative components in more detail however recent survey results from hospitals indicate that there is a large variance in demand across Trusts. We will be closely observing demand for these components over the next few months and we will adjust operations accordingly.

The need for a rapid introduction of these components has meant that the usual timeframes and processes have been considerably shortened resulting in temporary arrangements to some parts of the supply process. We are confident that these will be resolved in the coming months.

Please find attached a HEV Factsheet for Hospital Transfusion Teams which explains the changes we are implementing in more detail. We plan to supply HEV screened components from 14th March 2016.

We are very keen to work with you during this implementation and if you have any queries or questions not already addressed in the factsheet, please contact: **01865 381010** or NHSBT.customerservice@nhsbt.nhs.uk

Yours sincerely



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