

A.I.D.S.

**IMPORTANT
INFORMATION
FOR
BLOOD
DONORS**

AIDS is short for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. It is a very serious disease caused by a virus which depresses the body's resistance to infections and other illnesses. It is not transmitted by ordinary day-to-day social contact.

HOW IS AIDS TRANSMITTED?

The transmission of AIDS is not yet fully understood, but it is known that one means of transmitting the disease is through blood and blood products. Because of this, all blood donations are now being tested for antibody to the AIDS virus, but people in the groups most likely to be at risk from AIDS still **MUST NOT GIVE BLOOD**.

WHO IS MOST AT RISK FROM AIDS?

The high risk groups are:

1. Homosexual and bisexual men.
2. Drug abusers, both men and women, who inject drugs.
3. Haemophiliacs who have been treated with blood products.
4. Sexual contacts of people in these groups.

HOW CAN THE RISKS TO OTHERS BE REDUCED?

People in the high risk groups **MUST NOT GIVE BLOOD**. They should not attend donor sessions. The test may not pick up early cases of infection.

WHERE CAN THOSE AT RISK BE TESTED?

People in the high risk groups can be tested either through their own doctor or a Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD) clinic—in the strictest confidence.

HOW WILL BLOOD DONATIONS BE TESTED?

Occasionally donors may unknowingly carry the AIDS virus in their bodies. A test for anaemia is made before donation. Further tests for certain diseases are done later in the laboratory and these will now include the test for antibody to the AIDS virus. Donors will be asked to agree to the test.

HOW ARE THE RESULTS NOTIFIED?

In the very unlikely event of any of these tests being positive, a donor will be informed by the Regional Transfusion Director so that additional confirmatory tests can be arranged. A donor's medical history is always kept in the strictest confidence.

CAN DONORS GET AIDS BY GIVING BLOOD?

Absolutely not. Neither AIDS nor any other disease can be contracted from giving blood. All the materials used for collecting blood are sterile and are used only once.

Donors can discuss in confidence whether to give blood

- with a doctor at the blood collection session
- with their own doctor
- with the Director of their Blood Transfusion Centre
- at any Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD) clinic.

To find your nearest clinic look in the phone book under Venereal Diseases.



**REMEMBER,
AIDS IS A SERIOUS DISEASE**

Please do **not** give blood

- if you are a homosexual or bisexual man
- if you are a drug abuser who injects drugs
- if you are a haemophiliac who has been treated with blood products
- if you are a sexual contact of any of these people.

Our concern is for your safety and the safety of the patient who receives your blood.