CHI Franciscan Health

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BLOOD BANK ALERT

FROM YOUR LABORATORY SERVICE PROVIDER

Emergency RBCs

Joren Keylock, MD, Regional Laboratory Medical Director

In emergency situations O negative RBCs will only be dispensed to females <50 yrs, males <16 yrs, and patients with known anti-Rh(D) antibodies. All other patients will receive O positive RBCs.

In keeping with our goals of superior quality, patient safety, and good stewardship of limited community resources, CHI-FH laboratories would like to remind providers of our long-standing emergency blood release policy. The vast majority of patients should receive O positive RBCs, with the exceptions being women of child-bearing age, males <16, and patients with a known history of anti-Rh(D). In extremely rare circumstances when O negative RBCs supplies have been depleted, even these patients may have to receive O positive RBCs during a life-threatening hemorrhage.

This policy is in line with our local community and national standards of care. O negative RBCs are a scarce resource, and must be distributed throughout our community to ensure that they are available for women and young children. Pregnant women who are exposed to Rh(D) have a high rate of Rh(D) alloimmunization, which can cause recurrent fetal demise. Giving O negative to boys <16 yrs old is due to the local community standard.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- Emergency blood is for emergencies only
- ~1-3% of patients have a clinically significant RBC alloantibody, even O negative may be incompatible
- In one study 0.4% of emergency transfusions led to hemolytic transfusion reactions
- 85% of people are Rh(D) positive
- Studies show that during massive transfusions Rh(D) alloimmunization rates are low (~11-21%)
- Overall the risk of a hemolytic transfusion reaction receiving an Rh(D) positive unit is extremely low
- In cases where the patient is known to be Rh(D) negative, but is hemorrhaging, Rh(D) positive blood will be given for the above reasons.

If you have questions or concerns or would like more detailed information please contact Transfusion Services at 253-426-6654 (127-6654) for more information.

Sincerely,

Joren Keylock, MD