



Questions on Blood Safety and Supply raised for Héma-Québec March 23, 2020

Purpose:

Questions on Blood Safety and Supply raised by Thalassemia Foundation of Canada

Compiled by: Veeresh Pavate, Québec Representative for Thalassemia Foundation of Canada

Reply from: Nancy Robitaille, MD, Vice-Présidente à la médecine transfusionnelle, Héma-Québec.

BLOOD SAFETY CONCERNS

Question	Response and Action items
Is COVID-19 transmittable by blood?	No, there is no evidence in the scientific literature that COVID-19 is transmissible by blood
Is there a test to screen blood for COVID-19?	No, as it is not transmissible by blood. To our knowledge, no blood center in the world is performing such a test.
Does the freshness of the blood make a difference on transmission of COVID-19?	No, as it is not transmissible by blood.
Are there screening procedures in place? Before and after the March 16th.	See above. As of March 22, 3 questions were added to the donor questionnaire regarding exposure or infection to COVID-19.
What happens to blood that was collected before the March 17 deferral changes were put in-place? Is it safe?	It is delivered to hospitals as usual as COVID-19 is not transmissible by blood

BLOOD SHORTAGES CONCERNS

Question	Response and Action items
Is there a shortage? Blood shortages - Concern about blood supply.	There is no shortage at Héma-Québec and we do not anticipate any shortage for the coming week. Our team works diligently to keep a safe inventory. Donors are responding well to Mr. Legault's call to donate. Furthermore, we observe a decrease in requests from hospitals.
Is there a regional difference of supply?	No
Are donor centers the only place to donate? Are pop-up mobile clinics not running?	Although a few blood drives have been cancelled, we found alternative sites. Both mobile drives and fixed centers are opened. You can go to Héma-Québec's website to know all the locations.
What measures are in place to manage blood supply now? Event of a shortage, what are the contingencies in place?	<u>Is there a shortage?</u> No, contingency plans are in place. All elective surgeries have been cancelled by the Ministry. Hospitals are informed twice daily by email of Héma-Québec's inventory. Each hospital has to have its own contingency plan according to the "Plan des Mesures d'Urgence du Système du Sang ("PMUSS)". In the event of a shortage, allocation of blood would be managed by the PMSS.
What happens in the event of a shortage? What are the contingencies?	See above
Purchase of blood from the CBS/US?	It is a possibility but there is no need at this moment.

ACTION TO INCREASE BLOOD DONATIONS

Question	Response and Action items
How can TFC help in Québec?	If there any worries/fears about the blood system that cannot be answered by the hospital physicians, please address it to us.
Are mobile donation centers still in operation?	Yes, see section above

Further questions or concerns:

Please email: vpavate@ubishops.ca or info@thalassemia.ca