

PRESS RELEASE

Covid: blood donations do not stop even after restrictive measures

Call of the CNS and CIVIS, “Blood collection drops in all regions, everyday 1800 patients need transfusion”

Blood collection continues even after the Government measures aimed at reducing the spread of the new coronavirus; the donation of blood and blood components can be considered a “situation of necessity”, as stated in the Prime Ministerial Decree. Therefore, the movements of donors to both hospital collection units and to the collection units run by the voluntary blood donors associations are allowed. A specific act of the Directorate General for Health Prevention points out that it is necessary to allow also the movement of the staff of the above-mentioned associations operating at fix and mobile units nationwide.

The Italian National Blood Centre (CNS) and the Federation of the Italian Voluntary Blood Donors Associations (CIVIS) emphasize that 1800 patients need transfusions every day. Currently, the Italian regions are reporting a reduction in the collection, which is mainly compensated by the decision to postpone the non-urgent and elective surgery. “The effects of COVID-19 started impacting also on blood collection – states Giancarlo Maria Liunbruno, Director general of CNS – The balance is precarious considering also that non-elective surgery cannot be indefinitely postponed . Blood transfusions are a Basic Healthcare Service that must be ensured; therefore, blood donations cannot be interrupted. We suggest to donors who are in good health to book the donation by phone in order to avoid crowding at the unit premises. As for the donation, all the preventive measures have been taken to avoid the spreading” .

The new Note of the CNS, which takes into due consideration the last Ministerial Decree, includes the recommendations addressed to both donors and collection units. In particular, a 14 day deferral is put in place in the following situation: a donor travelled in China, a person who has been exposed to an infected person, a person who had the virus. In all cases, donors can give blood only if they have already complied with the obligation of home isolation/quarantine.



Centro Nazionale Sangue

Via Giano della Bella, 27 - 00162 Roma
Tel: +39 06 4990 4953 / 4963
Email: segreteriagenerale.cns@iss.it

“In this moment the attention is rightly addressed to the coronavirus, however, we cannot forget that every day there are patients who need transfusions, such as the thalassemia patients – states Gianpietro Briola, Coordinator of CIVIS – Donations can be safely carried out; moreover, Associations are also committed to ensuring to all staff working at the collection units the constant dissemination of the indications provided by the Ministry of Health on sanitation and disinfection of the environments”.

Recommendations for safe blood donations

In order to both avoid donors overcrowding in the waiting rooms and respect the interpersonal safety distance (at least 1 meter), it is recommended:

- to preferably call donors to schedule the donation in order to regulate donors flow; as for the prevention of the risk caused by the exposure to a COVID-19 infected person, please refer to the definition of "close contact" made by the ECDC and the Ministry of Health;
- to adopt preliminary triage measures, when the donor is contacted by phone;
- to promote the implementation of triage process in donors reception, including the extemporaneous measurement of body temperature. The activation of triage is aimed at both avoiding the possible spread of the virus in the waiting rooms and implementing donors pre-selection. The body temperature value of 37.5 ° C is suggested as a temporary donor deferral recruitment.
- to regularly manage donors flow in blood collection units as well as during donation.