

MYTH: 'Donors with sickle cell trait cannot donate blood'

FACT: Donors with sickle cell trait can donate blood, the blood from these donors can be transfused safely for most adults. However, this blood is not suitable for intra-uterine or neonatal use due to the higher risk of cells sickling and causing harm to the baby. Patients with sickle cell disorder are transfused sickle negative blood components

MYTH: 'Platelets can only be collected from male blood donors'

FACT: Female donors can donate platelets if they have a negative anti-HLA and anti-HNA antibody test. These tests are carried out at recruitment and after every pregnancy/miscarriage due to high risk of alloimmunisation during pregnancy

MYTH: 'We have enough donors and blood can be manufactured'

FACT: Only 7% of eligible population in the UK donate blood and components have a limited shelf life. There is a continual need for new blood donors especially more blood donors from Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities to meet the growing demand for better matched blood for patients

MYTH: 'Men who have sex with men are unable to donate blood'

FACT: Men who have sex with men are able to donate blood when they are in a long term relationship. Following implementation of FAIR recommendations, donors who have had anal sex with a new partner or multiple partners in the last three months will not be able to give blood at that time, regardless of their gender or their partner's gender

Sickle cell disorder most commonly affects people from black ethnic backgrounds where the Ro subtype is more common. Due to this, many patients with sickle cell disease have an Ro subtype. Only 2% of current regular donors have the Ro subtype. Donors with sickle trait can donate blood as long as they pass the health screen and have not received blood.

[Want to know more... just click the link](#)

Testing female donors prior to recruitment as platelet donors is to reduce Transfusion-Related Acute Lung Injury (TRALI) risk, a rare but serious complication in transfusion recipients. HLA, HNA antibodies in donor plasma have been implicated in TRALI and females are at higher risk of developing these antibodies.

[Want to know more... just click the link](#)

RESTORE is a clinical trial initiated by a joint research unit from NHSBT and the University of Bristol called the NIHR Blood and Transplant Research Unit in Red Blood Cell Products. The trial is studying the lifespan of the lab grown cells compared with infusions of standard red blood cells from the same donor.

[Want to know more... just click the link](#)

FAIR group completed a review to understand the highest risk sexual behaviours for acquiring blood-borne sexually transmitted infections. FAIR concluded that a more individualised risk-based approach should be taken to blood donor selection policy.

[Want to know more... just click the link](#)

**MYTHS
BUSTED**