



# Why give 2 when 1 will do?

Island Health is participating in **Using Blood Wisely**, a national campaign with a focus on reducing inappropriate red blood cell (RBC) transfusions using evidence-based guidelines.

## Why should YOU Use Blood Wisely?

Following Using Blood Wisely guidelines for appropriate transfusion:

- ✓ Reduces transfusion related harms for patients.
- ✓ Saves time for physicians, nurses, and blood bank staff.
- ✓ Respects blood as a limited and costly resource.

## Transfusion risks to patients

- ✓ Transfusion associated circulatory overload.
- ✓ Transfusion-related acute lung injury.
- ✓ Acute hemolytic transfusion reactions.
- ✓ RBC alloantibodies.
- ✓ Delayed hemolytic transfusion reactions.
- ✓ Anaphylaxis.

## Transfusion best practice in a non-bleeding patient

✓ Transfuse **1 unit at a time.**

✓ Transfuse only if Hb **less than 80 g/L.**

Hb > 80 to 90 g/L

- Likely inappropriate unless clear signs and symptoms of impaired tissue oxygen delivery.
- If transfusion is ordered clearly document indication in patient chart and discuss reasons with patient.

Hb < 80 g/L

- Consider transfusion in patients with pre-existing cardiovascular disease or evidence of impaired tissue oxygen delivery.
- Cardiac disease, elderly

Hb < 70 g/L

- Transfusion likely appropriate, transfuse 1 unit and recheck patient symptoms before giving 2nd unit.
- Younger patients may tolerate lower Hb (i.e. Hb < 60 g/L)

**Bleeding Patient**

- Maintain Hb > 70 g/L
- If pre-existing cardiovascular disease - maintain Hb > 80 g/L

## Give One Unit & Reassess

- ✓ Transfuse **one unit at a time** over 2 to 4 hours.
- ✓ For patients > 65 years, impaired cardiac or renal function, use slower rate and furosemide IV pre-transfusion.
- ✓ Assess the outcome (clinical, Hb) before transfusing further.
- ✓ Each unit increases Hb ~ 10 g/L in non-bleeding patient.

Do you want to learn more? Visit the [Choosing Wisely page on the Medical Staff website](#) to learn how you can join us as we Use Blood Wisely at Island Health.

For more information on transfusion guidelines at Island Health, visit the [Transfusion Medicine Intranet Page](#) to read some of the resources and internal guidelines developed for Island Health. *\*Island Health login required\**

- [Best Practice Decision Support for RBC Transfusion](#)
- [Pre-Operative Transfusion Medicine Recommendations](#)