

## (HLA TRALI INFORMATION)

### Important Information for Female Platelet Donors

We are grateful for the support you provide our community blood program and especially appreciate your willingness to help save lives as a volunteer platelet donor. We also take our responsibility to provide a safe and adequate blood supply very seriously and need to share the following information regarding females considering platelet donation.

At RRVBC, we perform a Human Leukocyte Antigen (HLA) antibody test on each of our female platelet donors who have ever been pregnant. Female platelet donors who have been pregnant since their last donation are retested for HLA antibodies after a subsequent pregnancy.

Testing is performed to reduce the risk of Transfusion Related Acute Lung Injury (TRALI) in patient recipients. TRALI is a rare but serious complication of blood transfusions most commonly thought to be caused by a reaction to HLA antibodies present in the donor's plasma. When transfused, these antibodies can sometimes cause plasma to leak into the patient's lungs, creating fluid accumulation. This condition is referred to as acute pulmonary edema.

Female donors who have been pregnant are more likely than others to have these HLA antibodies in their plasma. The antibodies could be harmful if transfused into certain patients. Because the antibodies are present in plasma, and platelet donations contain a high volume of plasma, our efforts are directed at screening blood samples from female platelet donors to test for the HLA antibody.

We are committed to providing the highest quality products and services to recipients and donors. We welcome your comments and questions regarding our HLA antibody test and will make every effort to keep you informed of any future developments that may affect you.

#### **Question & Answers:**

**What does HLA Mean?** Human Leukocyte Antigen. The antibody to HLA most often occurs in donors who have previously been pregnant, and can be found in plasma, and platelet products. Women, however, do not always become HLA antibody positive in pregnancy.

**Will I test positive for the HLA antibody if I have been pregnant?** Not always. We encourage you to continue donating platelets, allowing us the opportunity to perform HLA testing from your donation.

**Why is testing for the HLA antibody important?** Being accredited by AABB (formerly the American Association of Blood Banks), we look to them for the most up to date donor and patient safety guidance. AABB has deemed HLA antibody testing necessary to provide the safest platelet and plasma products to patients, helping to reduce further risk for transfusion-related complications.

**Does the test require any additional blood?** Performing this test does not require any extra time or an additional needle stick. There will be enough left from your regular donation to perform this test.

**Will you notify me of my HLA testing result?** If you test positive for the HLA antibody, you will be notified by a member of our medical office via mail that you are no longer eligible for platelet and plasma donations. However, we strongly encourage you to continue giving back to the community by donating whole blood or red cells, which are just as important to patients at the hospitals we serve.

**Is it harmful to me to have this antibody?** Having an HLA antibody poses no risk to you. The potential risk lies in the patient who received platelets or plasma from a donor with an HLA antibody.

**I have been donating for years. Could I have caused a complication in a patient?** Complications or transfusion reactions are rare. Please rest assured that you would have been notified if there had been a transfusion reaction in any patient who received one of your blood products.

**I tested positive for HLA antibody. I have been donating platelets for years. I have never been notified of any transfusion reaction from my donated blood products. Why can't I continue to donate platelets?** Although serious transfusion reactions are rare, the possibility is still present. We, along with AABB, believe it is our responsibility to provide the safest possible blood product to our community.

**I tested HLA positive. Can I ever donate again?** Though you cannot donate platelets or plasma, we strongly encourage you to continue donating whole blood or double red cells with RRVBC. The red cells prepared from your donation contain very little plasma, so you can continue to help patients in need.

For more information, please contact our Donor Care Advocate/Quality Assurance Department at 815-965-8751.