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What You Should Know About Chronic Fatigue Syndrome and Blood Donation

For your safety and the safety of transfusion recipients, there are instances in which people should not donate blood. One such case involves individuals diagnosed with chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS). People whose doctor has told them they have this syndrome should not donate blood. If you have CFS, you may want to provide us with your contact information so we can let you know if and when our recommendations change.

What is CFS?

CFS, also known as chronic fatigue and immune dysfunction syndrome (CFIDS) or myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME), is a complex and debilitating illness that affects the brain and multiple body systems.

There is no test for CFS; rather, it is diagnosed by doctors after performing a careful medical history, physical examination and series of laboratory test. No one knows what causes CFS.

Resources

The CFIDS Association of America (<http://www.cfids.org/blood.asp>) has long advised against CFS patients donating blood or organs. The National Cancer Institute in its interim guidelines, as posted on the CFIDS Association of America website (<http://www.cfids.org/xmrv/nci-guidelines.asp>), has reinforced the need for CFS patients to refrain from donating blood. If you have any additional questions, please contact Hoxworth Blood Center at (513) 558-1304 or your physician.

Reference: Guidance for Persons with CFS for Safe Blood Donation. CFIDS Association of America; Posted December 2009 and updated most recently on May 13, 2010.