

## Chagas disease (South American trypanosomiasis)

Chagas disease is found in South and Central America. It is caused by infection with a parasite called *Trypanosoma cruzi* (T. cruzi) and can be transmitted by transfusion. As treatment may not always cure T. cruzi infection, anyone who has ever been diagnosed with Chagas disease is not able to give blood.

Blood donation rules for possible exposure to T. cruzi apply if:

- You were born in South or Central America (including Mexico) or your mother was born there,
- You have lived in a rural subsistence community in this region for 4 weeks or more.

If you are in one of the categories above and have never been diagnosed with Chagas disease, we can take blood samples from you to carry out a T. cruzi antibody test. It must be at least 4 months since you last lived in a rural subsistence community in South or Central America (including Mexico). If this test gives a negative result, you will be able to give blood.

## Other infections

We keep a close eye on other infections that appear across the world. Sometimes this means we need to introduce new travel rules at short notice.

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**Travel outside the UK can affect giving blood. This is because some infections which may be caught overseas can be spread by blood transfusion.**

## Travel questions

We ask the following questions each time you donate:

- **Have you been outside the UK in the last 12 months?**
- **Were you born abroad?**
- **Have you ever lived or worked abroad?**
- **Have you ever had any illnesses during or after travel abroad?**

Our guidelines change frequently so you must tell us about your travel each time you come to donate.

## West Nile Virus

West Nile Virus (WNV) usually causes a mild illness but can cause more serious disease in patients who receive blood.

WNV is found in parts of North America, Europe and Central Asia. If you have travelled to one of these areas between 1st May and 30th November, we will decide if we need to test your donation for WNV. This test is added to the routine tests that we already carry out on all donations, so we don't need to take any extra samples.

## Tropical viruses

Tropical viruses include Chikungunya Virus, Dengue Virus, Yellow Fever Virus and Zika Virus. These are spread by mosquitoes found in tropical and subtropical regions throughout the world.

If you have travelled to an affected country, we will ask you to wait at least four weeks from your return before giving blood.

## Malaria

You can usually give blood 12 months after visiting a malarial area.

If you want to donate sooner, we can take a blood sample to test for malaria after 4 months. If this test is clear, you can come back before 12 months.

There are different rules in the following circumstances.

If you have lived in a malarial area for 6 months or more:

- **Wait at least four months after you were last in a malarial area.**
- **When you first come to donate we will take blood samples to test for malaria. If this test is clear you can come back to give blood as normal.**
- **If you travel again to a malarial area we will have to repeat the test. This is because you may have some immunity to malaria and may not show typical malaria symptoms if infected.**



If you have had malaria:

- **Wait at least three years after treatment and recovery from malaria (and at least four months after being in a malarial area)**
- **When you first come to donate we will take blood samples to test for malaria. If this test is clear you can come back to give blood as normal.**
- **If you travel again to a malarial area we will have to repeat the test. This is because you may have some immunity to malaria and may not show typical malaria symptoms if infected.**

If you have ever had an undiagnosed illness during or after travel which could have been malaria:

- **Wait at least four months after you were last in a malarial area.**
- **When you first come to donate we will take blood samples to test for malaria. If this test is clear you can give blood as normal.**
- **If you travel again to a malarial area you can give blood after 12 months, without a repeat malaria test. If you want to donate sooner, you can give samples four months after your travel.**