



Malaria and donation

Information
for blood
donors

Welcome. Thank you for giving blood today.

Living or travelling outside the UK can affect giving blood or plasma because some infections which can be spread by transfusion are more common overseas.



What is malaria?

Malaria is an infection carried by certain mosquitoes. A mosquito bite can infect you. Malaria can cause fever and headache. Without treatment, some people can become very ill and die. This is why people who live in or travel to certain countries are advised to take malaria tablets and use mosquito nets.

Malaria can be passed on by transfusion so we need to test donors with malaria risk factors to ensure their blood is safe for patients.

Who may be at risk of malaria?

Even people who have been exposed to malaria and are feeling well when they give blood may be infected with malaria. This is especially true for people who have lived in malarial areas and may have partial immunity to malaria.

You may be at risk of malaria if:

1. You have a previous history of malaria infection,
2. You were born and/or lived in a malarial area for at least 6 months,
3. You travelled to a malarial area and/or,
4. You had an unexplained fever within 4 weeks of returning from a malarial area.

What information do we need to identify malaria risks?

Country of birth

- Where were you born and how long did you live there?

Countries you have lived in

- When you were there (month and year) and how long for?
- Which area(s) you were in?

Countries you have travelled to

- Which countries and areas did you visit?
- How did you get there (eg flight, cruise)?
- How did you move around when there (by land/by air/by sea)?

- When you were there (month and year), how long for and when did you get back to the UK (month and year)?

Our current system does not allow us to see information you have given us before. Please be prepared to provide your travel and residency information each time you attend.

What happens when a risk factor for malaria is identified?

Whole blood and plasma: If you have a malaria risk factor and are eligible, you can donate today. We will do routine donation testing and test for malaria antibodies.

Platelets/other issues: In some cases, if eligible, we will take samples and invite you to donate if your results are negative and satisfactory.

Test results

Most donors have a negative malaria antibody result. If your malaria antibody test is **negative** and your other test results are satisfactory, we will gratefully use your donation for patient care. You can continue to donate as normal.

If your malaria antibody test is **reactive** or **positive**, you cannot donate and we cannot use your donation. We will contact you and explain what it means for you.

Donors with a history of malaria or those who have lived in or travelled to West Africa are more likely to have a positive antibody result.

A positive antibody result shows that you may have had malaria at some time. It does not necessarily mean that you have an active malaria infection now.

Will I need to be tested for malaria antibodies again?

We may need to repeat malaria antibody testing if you have had a new malaria risk since your last donation. Repeated testing is more likely if donors visit malarial areas after living in a malarial area for 6 months or more.

Why do you ask me to provide ethnicity details?

We are more likely to find similar blood groups in people with a similar heritage. This can be especially helpful for patients with Sickle Cell Disorder and Thalassaemia who rely on blood transfusions for their health and wellbeing.

Thank you

Thank you for coming forward to give blood and helping us to keep our blood supply safe.

Further information

If you have any questions on this, please do not hesitate to ask a member of staff. You can also read more about this on our website scotblood.co.uk



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Or to find out more, use the contact us form at scotblood.co.uk, email us at nss.snbtSENquiry@nhs.scot or alternatively, call us 9am-5pm, Monday to Friday, on 0345 90 90 999.

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