

Daily update
(6 November 2026, 5.15pm)

Blood shortage Amber Alert: use Group O blood only when essential

The Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service (SNBTS) is issuing an AMBER alert for Group O red cells from **Tuesday 10 November at 9am.**

At present there has been a reduction in stock holding for Group O blood in the labs by 20%.

Key actions for staff in the official guidance:

- All emergency surgery continues as per usual process
- All urgent surgery should proceed
- Non-urgent surgery where a group and screen would normally be taken is subject to a case-by-case review. If blood group is O, review cases to identify those at high risk of needing transfusion e.g. anaemia or potential for high blood loss, and consider postponing
- Aim for appropriate preoperative optimisation
- Use a transfusion threshold haemoglobin of 70g/L unless the patient is bleeding, has acute coronary syndrome, or is on a regular transfusion programme.
- Continue to implement patient blood management strategies to ensure alternatives to transfusion are employed wherever possible:
    - Tranexamic acid prior to surgery, if appropriate
    - Treatment of iron deficiency with oral or intravenous iron
    - **Single unit red cell transfusions** for stable non-bleeding patients not on a transfusion programme
    - Minimise iatrogenic anaemia
    - Optimise use of cell salvage.

At present any major haemorrhages that occur should be discussed with the on-call haematology team.

Further updates will be provided next week in line with the SNBTS and NHSScotland Integrated Blood Shortage Plan, and you can read the full alert here. More information can be found on Staffnet.

Staff who can give blood, particularly O negative and O positive donors, are also encouraged to book an appointment at scotblood.co.uk or call 0345 90 90 999.

Staff are reminded to make sure their personal contact details are up to date on eESS.

It is important to share Core Brief with colleagues who do not have access to a computer.
A full archive of printable PDFs are available on the website