

Is it safe now?

Since September 1991, all blood donated in the UK is checked for the hepatitis C Virus.

Modern safety standards are rigorous and have improved enormously since the tragic events which are the subject of the Inquiry.

We follow guidelines and advice from expert committees and bodies, many of which have donor or patient representatives as members. And we are regularly inspected by independent regulators.

The work of the UK blood services over many years means the UK has one of the safest blood supply services in the world.

All blood donors are screened at every donation and their blood is tested in our laboratories before it is sent to hospitals. Blood services and blood safety has been transformed not only in terms of technological advances in testing but also in the way that we recruit and ensure that donors are safe to donate. We also work closely with partners in the UK and internationally to monitor any emerging issues.

Whilst blood transfusion is not, and never will be, without risk, we are confident that with modern science, systems and processes, we are much more responsive and work much more quickly than we did in the past.

Further Support

If you received a blood transfusion or blood products before September 1991 or you received an organ transplant before 1992 and you are worried please contact the Concerns team to discuss further.

email: concerns@wales.nhs.uk or

telephone: 029 218 36318

The Concerns Office is open at the following times:

Monday & Tuesdays 7.30am to 4pm

Wednesday 7.30am to 6pm

Thursday & Friday 7.30am to 4pm

Or you can write to us at:

Chief Executive, Cardiff and Vale University Health Board, Maes y Coed Road, Cardiff CF14 4HH.

If you have a bleeding disorder or your loved one has/had a disorder, you may wish to contact the dedicated team based in the Haemophilia centre.

If you, a relative or loved one would like any support relating to any issues raised by the Infected Blood Inquiry please contact the Bleeding Disorders Network.

email:

BDNW.InfectedBloodInquiry.Cav@wales.nhs.uk

or telephone: 0800 952 0055



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Infected Blood Inquiry

Information for patients



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The antibody test

The antibody blood test determines whether you have ever been exposed to the hepatitis C virus by testing for the presence of antibodies to the virus. Antibodies are produced by your immune system to fight germs. The test will not show a positive reaction for some months after infection because your body takes time to make these antibodies.

If the test is negative, but you have symptoms or you may have been exposed to hepatitis C, you may be advised to have the test again.

A positive test indicates that you have been infected at some stage. It doesn't necessarily mean you are currently infected, as you may have since cleared the virus from your body.

The only way to tell if you are currently infected is to have a second blood test, called a PCR test.

The PCR Test

The PCR blood test checks if the virus is still present by detecting whether it is reproducing inside your body.

A positive test means that your body has not fought off the virus and you are currently infected.

Getting Tested for Hepatitis C

A blood test can be carried out to see if you have the infection. This is done by a finger prick test.

You can also get a free home test using the link below:

visit: phw.referralportal.co.uk
or scan the QR code:



Early diagnosis and treatment can help prevent or limit any damage to your liver and help ensure the infection isn't passed on to other people.

What is it?

The Infected Blood Inquiry is an independent public statutory Inquiry established to examine the circumstances in which men, women and children treated by national health services in the United Kingdom were given infected blood and infected blood products, in particular in the 1970s and 1980s.

Who was/could be affected?

Anyone who had a blood transfusion or blood product pre-September 1991.

The risk of contraction of a virus such as hepatitis C was very low. However, there's a very small chance that people may have been infected with hepatitis C if:

- you received a blood transfusion or blood products before September 1991
- you received an organ transplant before 1992

Before 1992 donated organs were not routinely screened for hepatitis C and there is a very small risk a donated organ from someone with hepatitis C could also spread the infection.