Are Blood Donations Safe From Hepatitis C?

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Widespread blood screening for hepatitis C began in 1992 by all donation centers in the United States. Prior to 1992, the chance of contracting hepatitis C and other viral infections through blood donation was higher.

Those who received blood or blood products prior to 1992 are at higher risk for hepatitis C. Testing for hepatitis C is recommended.

Blood Screening Tests

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) states blood screening is done on all blood donations for the following;

- Hepatitis B virus (HBV)
- Hepatitis C virus (HCV)
- Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) Types 1 and 2
- Human T-Lymphotropic Virus (HTLV) Types 1 and II
- Treponema pallidum (syphilis)
- West Nile virus (WNV)
- Zika Virus (ZIKV)
- Bacterial Contamination
- Babesia
- Trypanosoma Cruzi (Chagas disease)
- Cytomegalovirus (CMV)
- Note: Coronavirus testing may be required if you have traveled to China recently or if you been possibly exposed to Coronavirus (2019-nCoV)

The American Red Cross reports that every unit of blood is also tested to identify the donor's blood type (O, A, B or AB) and Rh type along with screening for atypical or usual red cell antibodies.

All donation centers require an extensive donor questioner be completed prior to donation. The American Red Cross states in order to protect patients, it is their policy that all blood donations are tested for several types of hepatitis, HIV, syphilis, and other infectious diseases.

If a test comes back positive, the blood donation will not be given to a patient. You will be notified if your blood tested positive for any of the tested diseases.

The blood donation center will not release your test results without your written permission unless required by law.

In Summary

Since 1992 blood donations in the U.S. have been tested for hepatitis C and various infectious diseases. If blood shows positive it is not given to any patient and the donor is notified.

Testing for hepatitis C is not apart of standard blood screening with annual tests from your primary care physician or with hospital visits. If you have risk factors for hepatitis C or symptoms related to liver disease, seek testing and treatment.

Resources:

CDC (The Center for Disease Control and Prevention)

The American Red Cross

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