



Patient Blood Management Frequently Asked Questions

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What is patient blood management?

Patient blood management (PBM) is an evidence-based, multidisciplinary approach for optimizing the care of patients who may need a transfusion. In other words, PBM is an approach to patient care that seeks to ensure that patients who do not need transfusions are not transfused, and that those patients who do require transfusions receive the appropriate care as quickly and safely as possible.

Is the goal of PBM to reduce transfusions?

Not exactly. The goal of PBM is to ensure that decision-making surrounding transfusions is evidence based. There are many instances in which a transfusion is the only appropriate intervention for a patient; however, there also are instances when transfusions can be avoided. For this reason, PBM programs should address preoperative anemia and the use of alternative therapies to ensure that a patient undergoing an elective surgical procedure has been appropriately prepared for the procedure.

What are some examples of PBM program activities?

Below are some major elements of a comprehensive patient blood management program. Implementation may be gradual, and a phased approach may allow for cost-savings that result from early interventions to be reinvested for future program growth.

- Acquire a clinical and executive-level PBM champion.
- Implement a multidisciplinary transfusion committee to assist in review of service-line blood utilization practices, review of practitioner blood utilization practices and participate in peer-to-peer education.
- Implement blood utilization guidelines.
- Develop a blood order set with appropriate indications for transfusion and that is integrated into the computerized ordering system; if not, a paper order set can be used.
- Provide PBM-related educational materials and training opportunities.

- Develop a quality plan that includes identifying someone to coordinate data management and an individual to perform case audits.
- Establish preoperative anemia treatment protocols.
- Develop blood-sparing protocols such as restrictive use of phlebotomy, and judicious use of anticoagulants and platelet inhibitors.
- Implement perioperative practices, which can include:
 - Use of topical/systemic hemostatic agents.
 - Judicious use of anticoagulants and platelet inhibitors postoperatively.
 - Normovolemic hemodilution.
 - Intraoperative blood recovery.
 - Postoperative blood recovery.
 - Thromboelastography (TEG) and rotational thromboelastometry (ROTEM).
 - Ancillary techniques including deliberate hypotension, patient positioning to reduce bleeding and meticulous suturing.

All of these elements are reflected in AABB's *Standards for a Patient Blood Management Program*, which requires such actions as:

- Developing evidence-based transfusion guidelines and ensuring compliance.
- Credentialing of individuals who order and administer blood components.
- Implementing measures in the preoperative or preintervention setting such as a maximum surgical blood ordering schedule, identification of patients who refuse transfusions, identification of patients who may benefit from interventions intended to reduce the need for allogeneic transfusions, and planning for blood needs and alternatives.
- Annually reporting on items such as allogeneic transfusion rates by service line and/or procedure type, use and efficacy of preoperative anemia management interventions, and adoption of PBM techniques.

These are just a few examples of required activities described in the standards. PBM programs also should interface with clinicians across service lines, other allied health professionals, the blood bank and the perioperative autologous blood management team.

Why is PBM important?

Year after year, blood transfusions remain one of the most frequently performed procedures in U.S. hospitals. While the blood community has worked diligently to make blood as safe as possible, transfusions are still associated with undesirable outcomes and patient complications. PBM demonstrates your hospital's commitment to patient-centered, evidence-based care and ensures that the life-saving gift of a blood donation is used responsibly.

Where can I learn more about PBM?

Visit www.aabb.org/pbm for more resources and services related to PBM.