

Policy Document from Dept of Transfusion Medicine for COVID 19

Policy statement

Dept. of Transfusion Medicine, SGPGIMS shall promote and implement safe work practices and procedures amongst laboratory personnel in accordance with established national and institute guidelines for prevention / containment of COVID-19 infection.

Risk of exposure

According to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), there have been no reported or suspected cases of transfusion-transmitted COVID-19. No cases of transfusion-transmission have ever been reported for the other two coronaviruses that emerged during the past two decades (SARS and MERS-CoV). Individuals are not at risk of contracting COVID-19 through the blood donation process or via a blood transfusion, since respiratory viruses are generally not known to be transmitted by donation or transfusion. Health care workers in blood banks are thus, essentially in the “Low risk” category.

General Preventive safety measures

- Staggered duties of staff including faculty, residents, technicians, nursing staff, attendants to reduce chances of exposure to COVID.
- Universal safety precautions or standard precautions applicable to medical laboratory shall be strictly adhered
- All samples/ blood bags shall be regarded as potentially infectious, and healthcare workers involved in handling and transporting shall adhere to standard precautions to minimise the possibility of exposure to pathogens.
- Staff engaged in all areas of blood bank shall wear appropriate Personal protective equipment at all times while in lab.
- PPE (including gloves, head cover, shoe cover and triple layer medical mask) shall be worn by all category of staff.
Note: Reusable hand woven triple layer cloth mask may be worn if triple layer medical mask is not available
- Regular floor and working bench cleaning / mopping with 1% Sodium hypochlorite solution shall be carried out at least twice on each working day
- Equipment shall be disinfected using non-corrosive disinfectant (Cidex or equivalent)/ 70% concentration of ethanol at least once daily.
- Work surfaces and frequently touched surfaces including door knobs & handles shall be disinfected with 1% Sodium hypochlorite solution at least twice on each working day

- Waste generated during working of blood bank shall be treated as infectious waste and subjected to disinfection using 1% sodium hypochlorite before handing over the same for autoclaving and final disposal.
- Movement of staff shall be restricted and there shall be strict prohibition of eating/ drinking in laboratory area.

Safety measures adopted in Blood Donation area

- The dept issues pass both as hard copy as well as e-pass mentioning date of donation to the donorsto allow them to travel to SGPGIMS blood donation. This helps to restrict crowding as well as avoid unnecessary travel of donors to the hospital
- *Primary Screening in Holding Area 1:*
 - As per the office order PGI/CMS/Estt/1306/2020 dated 30th April 20, Blood donors coming for blood donation shall report in holding area 1 where they will be evaluated as per the Institute standard protocol to assess the safety with regards to Covid 19.
 - Prospective donors and their attendants to be advised to carry Covid-19 testing report from recognized Lab to avoid stay in holding area.
- *Restriction at level of blood bank entry.*
 - Only Donors allowed by the Holding Area 1 shall be allowed in the Blood donor complex.
 - The dept has implemented strict donor only policy to reduce the number of people entering inside the donor complex. The patient relative and friends are asked to wait in the Old OPD waiting area. It is made mandatory to wear a face mask while coming to blood bank. Donors not wearing mask are not allowed inside
 - Temperature by thermal scanning: The donors are checked for body temperature by a portable thermal temperature monitor and those found fit are only allowed inside the donor complex.
 - Social distancing in the blood donation Complex: The donors are made to sit at distance from each other maintaining physical and social distancing.
- Use of physical barrier in the form of transparent blinds are being placed between the staff and donors at various stations such Hb screening and medical screening and examination.
- Covid related questionnaire and post donation instruction for donors has been implemented as per the guidelines issued by NBTC.
- The blood donor couches are kept at distance to maintain the physical distancing between donors and staff
- Sanitization of donor: The donors are given hand rub to clean their hands, advice to keep wearing the face mask at all times.
- The staffs have to follow universal safety precautions. They have to wear gloves, face mask and disposable gown at all times while station in the donor complex. The staff is advised to practice strict hand hygiene.

Safety measures adopted in Cross Matching Lab:

I. Blood Requisitions from Patients admitted in SGPGIMS (Non Covid Areas):

- Transportation of samples and blood component through Pneumatic System will be encouraged to avoid unnecessary movements of ward attendants in the lab.
- Universal Laboratory safety precautions shall be followed.
- Standard safety protocols of social distancing, Face masks, hand washing and use of sanitizers shall be followed at all times.

II. Blood Requisitions for patients admitted in Rajdhani Covid Hospital or Holding Area:

- Laboratory personnel dealing with samples from suspected or confirmed COVID-19 patients, should follow recommended PPE for health care providers such as
 - Face mask
 - Disposable apron
 - Gloves
 - Head Cap
 - Discard samples, test tubes in a container containing hypochlorite solution
- Samples shall be processed In QC Lab (designated Area) in Biosafety Cabinet.
- Any procedure with potential of generating aerosols such as centrifugation will be handled carefully as under
 - Use centrifuge dedicated for COVID only placed in Quality Control (QC) lab
 - Centrifugation shall be done with caps on test tubes / vacutainers
 - After centrifugation, the cap shall be removed in the biosafety cabinet in QC lab
 - All dispensing of samples / reagents shall be done in biosafety cabinet, and centrifugation will be done in dedicated card centrifuge placed in QC lab
 - For incubation of cards, biosafety cabinet shall be used. Keep the card in cabinet for 15 min.
- All testing on COVID samples shall be done using cards ONLY and manually. DO NOT USE AUTOMATED SYSTEM FOR ABO/Rh and CROSS MATCH

III. Policy for issue of blood to thalassemia patients

- Thalassemia patients admitted in Medical Genetics / Hematology deptt of SGPGI will be issued blood component as and when required
- If requested by the treating consultant at SGPGIMS patients such as with red cell alloantibody or very sick patients who already registered with SGPGIMS and who cannot come to SGPGI for transfusion can be issued blood outside SGPGI subject to availability on following conditions
 - Provided Blood requisition and blood sample meets all the standard requirements and mentions the name, MCI registration number, stamp and mobile number of the doctor responsible for collecting sample and managing patient during and after transfusion.
 - The request for blood transfusion will be endorsed by the treating deptt (Medical Genetics / Hematology).

- The request and blood sample is brought by Attendant carrying COVID negative report and is accompanied by Covid 19 negative blood donor in line with the institute policy referred above.
- They shall pass through same channel ie. Screening area I and II and once tagged green they shall be allowed to come to Transfusion Medicine Dept at C block.
- The responsibility of maintenance of cold chain during transport and adherence to standard patient transfusion guidelines will remain with patient attendants.