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Implementation: To be determined by each Service

## Change Notification UK National Blood Services No. 30 - 2020

# Coronavirus Infection

### These changes apply to the Bone Marrow & Peripheral Blood Stem Cells Donor Selection Guidelines

Please update the current Coronavirus Infection topic with this entry:

*Includes* SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome)  
MERS (Middle Eastern Respiratory Syndrome)  
COVID-19 (due to infection with SARS-CoV-2 virus, previously known as Novel Coronavirus or 2019-nCoV)

*Definition* **Confirmed Infection:** If a diagnostic test has been performed and is positive, this constitutes a confirmed infection.

**Suspected Infection:** Compatible symptoms as per UK GOV definition [given below](#) and who has not been tested ~~in community~~ or ~~is awaiting test result.~~ ~~in hospital.~~ ~~Case definitions for inpatients and community cases currently in use can be accessed at the UK Government website [here](#) and [here](#)~~

**Symptoms of coronavirus infection:** The most common symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) infection are:

- Recent onset of a new, continuous cough
- High temperature
- Loss of, or a change in, normal sense of taste or smell

**Recovery from Coronavirus symptoms:** In line with Public Health England advice, donors can be considered to have recovered if they are well and free of fever and respiratory symptoms. Some individuals may have a ~~persistent~~ cough or ~~reduced sense of smell or taste~~ for some weeks after resolution of their infection, ~~but can be considered as recovered for the purposes of tissue and cell donation.~~

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## 1. Person with confirmed **symptomatic** ~~or suspected~~ **Coronavirus infection**

*Obligatory* **Must not donate if less than 3 months** since resolution of symptoms.

*Discretionary* a. If **more than 3 months** have passed since resolution of symptoms, accept.

b. If **less than 3 months** since resolution of symptoms: refer to designated clinical support officer for individual risk assessment, if donation is urgent and cannot be delayed.

See additional information.

## 2. Person with confirmed **Coronavirus infection without symptoms**

*Obligatory* **Must not donate if less than 3 months** since confirmation of infection by positive results in a diagnostic test.

*Discretionary* If **less than 3 months** have passed since confirmation of infection by positive results in a diagnostic test, refer to designated clinical support officer for individual risk assessment, if donation is urgent and cannot be delayed.

See additional information.

## 3. Person with **suspected Coronavirus infection**

*Obligatory* **Must not donate if less than 3 months** since resolution of symptoms.

*Discretionary* a. If **more than 3 months** have passed since resolution of symptoms, accept.

b. If **less than 3 months** since resolution of symptoms, and if the donor has not been tested to exclude the diagnosis of coronavirus infection, refer to designated clinical support officer for individual risk assessment, if donation is urgent and cannot be delayed.

or

c) If **more than 14 days** have passed since resolution of symptoms, and donor has been tested and advised they **do not** have coronavirus infection, and the donor remains well, accept.

## 4. Contact with a confirmed or suspected case of **Coronavirus infection**

*Obligatory* **Must not donate if:**

**Less than 28 days** from the first day of contact with an individual with a confirmed or suspected infection.

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*Discretionary*

(a) If **more than 28 days** since the first day of contact with an individual with a confirmed or suspected infection, and the donor remained well with no symptoms of Coronavirus infection, accept.

(b) If **less than 28 days** and donor remained well with no symptoms of Coronavirus infection, and if the donation is urgent and cannot be delayed for 28 days, accept with individual risk assessment.

The donor should be advised to follow Public Health advice and take precautions to avoid infection in the 28 days before donation.

*Additional Information*

Common coronaviruses cause colds and respiratory tract infections but are not considered a specific risk for BM and PBSC transplant recipients. Since 2002 there have been outbreaks in humans of new strains of coronavirus, associated with severe pulmonary infections and mortality rates of 10-35% e.g. SARS and MERS.

COVID-19 is an illness characterised by respiratory symptoms, including coughing and breathlessness, and fever. It is caused by infection with a newly identified Coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2. Its full pathogenesis remains unknown but individuals with certain underlying chronic conditions, the elderly and immunocompromised individuals are at risk of more severe disease.

Some persons with coronavirus infection may be asymptomatic. It is possible that they may have undergone testing for occupational health reasons (for example).

It is recommended that all bone marrow and peripheral blood stem cell donors, including those without symptoms or diagnosis of COVID 19 living in, or who have visited areas of sustained community transmission, are tested for the presence of viral RNA before donation. Donor must have tested negative for the presence of the viral RNA in the upper respiratory tract.

There is no evidence at present that coronaviruses can be transmitted by tissue/cell transplantation and therefore these measures are precautionary.

ECDC guidance suggests that donors recovering from confirmed infection may donate stem cells at least 14 days after laboratory evidence of clearance of viral RNA from the upper respiratory tract or 28 days after symptom resolution, at the discretion of the designated medical officer, if the donation cannot be delayed. However in the current entry the deferral period for bone marrow & stem cell donation is longer than other tissue and cell donations taking donor safety into consideration.

Further guidance has been provided by the British Society for Bone Marrow Transplantation, and is available at:  
[http://www.bsbmtct.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/BSBMTCT-recommendations-for-COVID\\_May2020\\_ver3.0-FINAL.pdf](http://www.bsbmtct.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/BSBMTCT-recommendations-for-COVID_May2020_ver3.0-FINAL.pdf)

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*Post donation illness* Donors must be provided with information about contacting the registry co-ordinating their donation and the collection centre they donated at if they develop any illness within 14 days after donation.

*Reason for Change* ~~This entry has been rewritten to take account of changes in the UK response to the 2020 COVID-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic and guidance from EBMT and the WMDA. This entry replaces the previous entry.~~  
I) Amended definitions to provide more information on symptoms of infection.  
II) Provision of separate guidance for symptomatic, asymptomatic and suspected cases of infection.  
III) 'Additional Information' section expanded.

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