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Transfusion-associated Red Eye syndrome

Since December 1997, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has received approximately 100 reports, from 10 different states, of patients who have developed severe conjunctivitis within 24 hours of transfusion. To date, all reported reactions have been associated with receipt of leukocyte-depleted red blood cells. In addition to "red eyes", many patients have experienced ocular pain, periorbital edema, arthralgias, and headache. The symptoms have generally resolved within 2 to 14 days after onset; no permanent sequelae have been reported.

The CDC, Food and Drug Administration, and blood bank officials are conducting investigations to determine the potential etiology and extent of these reactions. Health care providers, blood bank personnel, and local health officials should report all confirmed, or suspected, cases of transfusion-associated red eye syndrome to the CDC's Hospital Infections Program by phone at (404) 639-6413 or by fax at (404) 639-6459.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention