**IBTS imports blood from the NHSBT for a third time**

The IBTS announced today (Wednesday) that it is importing a consignment of blood from NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT) to address a current shortage in the blood supply. 350 units of RhD Negative blood groups, O negative, A negative and B negative are being collected from England today. This is the third time the IBTS has imported blood from NHSBT in the last year. The IBTS does occasionally import a small number of rare blood units.

“The IBTS is again activating our contingency arrangement with NHSBT in England to supplement blood stocks and avoid raising an alert under the Irish national blood shortage plan, which could have a serious impact on patient care,” said IBTS Operations Director, Paul McKinney.

In addition to importing blood from NHSBT, the IBTS is asking for public support to maintain the blood supply. “The appointment based system introduced at the beginning of the pandemic has helped us to manage donor attendance and keep donors and staff safe on clinic. However, maintaining RhD negative blood groups has remained exceptionally difficult and with just 2 days of O negative blood in stock, the IBTS is closer than it has ever been to declaring an amber alert which would have a direct impact on hospital activity, particularly for planned surgeries.

“In recent weeks, approximately 20% of our booked appointments have not shown up to donate. While we are hugely grateful to all our donors who have continued to support us throughout the pandemic, this has a very real and consequential effect on our ability to collect blood and maintain the supply. Over the last number of weeks we have continued to issue more RhD negative blood to hospitals than we have been able to collect, so the IBTS has made the decision to request a consignment of blood from the UK to ensure continuity of supply over the next week.

“In addition to importing blood from the NHSBT, we are urging donors to make an appointment next week to give blood. If you receive a text message from us, please respond to the number provided to make an appointment and once you have made that appointment please commit to keeping it, if at all possible, we really need your support,” he added.

NHS Blood and Transplant is able to support the IBTS with this request without impacting on their services due to the comparative scale of the organisation.

The IBTS continues to adhere to public health guidelines to ensure the safety of its donors. To donate please go to [www.giveblood.ie](http://www.giveblood.ie) for the latest information on COVID-19 measures and how to give blood safely through the appointment system. Additional clinics will be arranged to facilitate donation. For first time donors please complete the eligibility quiz and register your interest to donate online and we will contact you when we have a clinic in your area.

**ENDS**

**Note to editor**

Only 3% of the population are blood donors and approximately 9% of these are O negative. However, as this blood can be transfused to patients of all groups, issues of this blood group to hospitals frequently hits 15% thus requiring more frequent calls on donors of this group. The IBTS needs to collect 3,000 units of blood every week to maintain the national blood supply.