

Change Notification for the UK Blood and Tissue Services

Notification date	8 September 2026
Effective date	6 October 2026
Implementation	To be determined by each Service

CN 39-2026

Snake bites

Content changed	Type of change	Guidelines affected
1 Animal bite, non-human	Updated entry	Bone marrow
2 Animal bite, non-human	Updated entry	Cord blood
3 Snake bite	Removed entry	Bone marrow Cord blood



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Chair, Standing Advisory Committee on Cellular Therapy Products (SACCTP)



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Note: this document indicates inserted and ~~deleted~~ text. This formatting will not apply in the published text.

1. Animal bite, non-human

Guidelines affected	Reason for change
Bone marrow	Guidance on snake bites is now included in this entry. A reminder to assess treatments beyond local wound care has been added to the 'Additional information' section. The 'See if relevant' links have been updated.

Essential information

<u>Includes</u>	<u>Snake bite</u>
Obligatory	All donors: Must not donate if: 1. Ever been bitten by a non-human primate. 2. Any wound is infected or not healed. 3. Less than 24 months since bitten anywhere in the world by a bat or by any other mammal outside of the British Isles (UK and Ireland). 4. <u>The donor is not fully recovered.</u>

Supporting information

See if relevant	• Infection, general • Inoculation injury • Rabies • <u>Surgery</u>
Additional information	Being bitten by a non-human primate should result in permanent deferral. Risks include simian T-lymphotropic virus, herpes B, simian foamy virus and other as yet unknown viruses. Non-human primates include chimpanzees, gorillas, orangutans, gibbons, monkeys (old and new world), tarsiers, lemurs and lorises. Animal bites may result in many different infections. Allowing all wounds to heal and for any obvious infection to have resolved should avoid problems.

As well as local care of the bite, donors may receive other treatments such as antibiotics or immunisation; these may affect the donor's eligibility. Bites from venomous snakes can cause extensive local tissue damage that can take a long time to heal and may require surgery. Depending on the species of biting snake, their venom can cause problems with blood clotting and, in severe cases, require transfusion of blood components (e.g. plasma or cryoprecipitate).

Rabies, and similar diseases, have long incubation periods and do not show as a wound infection. There is no evidence that these infections have ever been transmitted through a blood transfusion. These diseases appear to be confined to the nervous system during their incubation periods. There is evidence that they have been transmitted through organ, tissue and ocular transplants. For this reason, there are different rules for material that may contain nervous system tissue.

Anyone who has been in unusual contact with a bat, such as handling a sick or injured bat, or woken to find that a bat has been with them while asleep, should be considered at risk of rabies. Bat bites are usually insignificant and easily overlooked. Merely being in a place where bats roost is not considered a risk.

2. Animal bite, non-human

Guidelines affected	Reason for change
Cord blood	Guidance on snake bites is now included in this entry. A reminder to assess treatments beyond local wound care has been added to the 'Additional information' section. The 'See if relevant' links have been updated.

Essential information

<u>Includes</u>	<u>Snake bite</u>
Obligatory	Must not donate if: 1. Ever been bitten by a non-human primate. 2. Any wound is infected or not healed. 3. Less than 24 months since bitten anywhere in the world by a bat or by any other mammal outside of the British Isles (UK and Ireland). 4. <u>The donor is not fully recovered.</u>

Supporting information

See if relevant	• Infection, general • Inoculation injury • Rabies • <u>Surgery</u>
Additional information	Being bitten by a non-human primate should result in permanent deferral. Risks include simian T-lymphotropic virus, herpes B, simian foamy virus and other as yet unknown viruses. Non-human primates include chimpanzees, gorillas, orangutans, gibbons, monkeys (old and new world), tarsiers, lemurs and lorises. Animal bites may result in many different infections. Allowing all wounds to heal and for any obvious infection to have resolved should avoid problems. <u>As well as local care of the bite, donors may receive other treatments such as antibiotics or immunisation; these may affect the donor's eligibility. Bites from</u>

venomous snakes can cause extensive local tissue damage that can take a long time to heal and may require surgery. Depending on the species of biting snake, their venom can cause problems with blood clotting and, in severe cases, require transfusion of blood components (e.g. plasma or cryoprecipitate).

Rabies, and similar diseases, have long incubation periods and do not show as a wound infection. There is no evidence that these infections have ever been transmitted through a cord blood donation. These diseases appear to be confined to the nervous system during their incubation periods. There is evidence that they have been transmitted through organ, tissue and ocular transplants. For this reason, there are different rules for material that may contain nervous system tissue.

Anyone who has been in unusual contact with a bat, such as handling a sick or injured bat, or woken to find that a bat has been with them while asleep, should be considered at risk of rabies. Bat bites are usually insignificant and easily overlooked. Merely being in a place where bats roost is not considered a risk.

3. Snake bite

Guidelines affected	Reason for change
Bone marrow	Guidance on snake bites is now included in the 'Animal bite, non-human' entry, which now includes 'snake bite' as a search term.
Cord blood	

This entry will be removed.

Essential information

<i>Obligatory</i>	<i>Must not donate until:</i>
	<i>Recovered.</i>