

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 40-2026

Donor weight and weight loss medication

Content changed	Type of change	Guidelines affected
1 Weight	Updated entry	Bone marrow
2 Weight loss medication	New entry	Bone marrow
3 Weight loss medication	New entry	Cord blood
4 Weight loss medication	New entry	Tissue (deceased) Tissue (live)



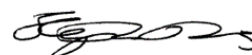
Dr Kenneth Douglas

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



Dr Richard Lomas

Chair, Standing Advisory Committee
on Tissues (SACT)



Dr Stephen Thomas

Professional Director, JPAC

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

1. Weight

Guidelines affected	Reason for change
Bone marrow	Guidance has been updated to allow acceptance of donors under 50 kg, provided there is no unacceptable weight disparity between the donor and recipient.

Essential information

Definition/s	BMI: body mass index
Obligatory	1. Bone marrow donor: Must not donate if: a. BMI <u>is</u> over 35. b. Under 50 kg (7 stone 12 lb) <u>and the donor's weight is significantly less than the recipient's weight (see Additional information below).</u> 2. PBSC donor: Must not donate if: a. BMI <u>is</u> over 40. <u>b. BMI is below 18.5.</u> <u>c. Under 30 kg (4 stone 10 lb).</u> <u>d. b. Under 50 kg (7 stone 12 lb) and the donor's weight is significantly less than the recipient's weight (see Additional information below).</u> <u>e. c. The donor is so overweight that they have difficulty in getting on to or off the donation couch bleed bed.</u> <u>f. d. Venous access is very difficult.</u>
Discretionary	1. Bone marrow donor: a. If BMI is >35 to <40, refer to Designated Clinical Support Officer. Obtain anaesthetic <u>opinion</u> option, considering other anaesthetic risk factors and technical feasibility. 2. PBSC donor: a. If BMI is 40 to <43, refer to Designated Clinical Support Officer, considering venous access. b. Treatment with anti-obesity drugs, accept.

Supporting information

Additional information

UK Blood and Tissue Service staff should not put their own health at risk by helping donors on and off the donation couch except in an emergency.

It is recommended that no donor should lose more than 15% ~~13%~~ of their blood volume during any donation procedure. This is to protect them from adverse effects such as fainting ~~and becoming anaemic~~. When bone marrow is donated, however, the donor receives intravenous fluid perioperatively and this allows a volume of bone marrow to be taken that is more than 15% of the donor's blood volume. The maximum volume to be taken is determined by the donor's weight in kilograms, and for most Transplant Centres this is up to 20 mL of bone marrow per kilogram of body weight, as per European Society for Blood and Marrow Transplantation (EBMT) guidance. Bone marrow donors also receive iron supplements post-donation to facilitate rapid recovery of any donation-related anaemia.

To ensure engraftment in the recipient, it is vital that a bone marrow harvest contains a sufficient blood stem cell dose. This is calculated by dividing the absolute total nucleated cell dose in the harvest by the recipient's weight in kilograms. When there is a large weight disparity between donor and recipient, there is a high risk of failure to achieve the minimum target total nucleated cell dose. However, lighter donors may be accepted providing that the weight disparity with the recipient is not unacceptable, and providing the donor is in good health and otherwise eligible to donate. This should always be discussed with the Transplant Centre. However, there are potential cell dose concerns if the donor's weight is less than 70% of the recipient's weight. The suggested figure of 70% comes from consultation with the UK bone marrow transplant community, rather than from any formal guidance document.

Similarly, to ensure recipient engraftment, it is vital that a PBSC collection contains a sufficient blood stem cell dose. As for bone marrow harvest, this is calculated by dividing the absolute blood stem cell dose in the apheresis product by the recipient's weight in kilograms. As for bone marrow, lighter donors may be accepted providing that the Transplant Centre does not consider that there is too large a weight disparity with the recipient, and providing the donor is in good health and otherwise eligible to donate. As for bone marrow, there are potential cell dose concerns if the donor's weight is less than 70% of the recipient's weight. Again, the suggested figure of 70% comes from consultation with the UK bone marrow transplant community, rather than from any formal guidance document.

Adult donors weighing less than 30 kg may not be accepted under any circumstances, since the volume of the cell separator machine's extracorporeal circuit would then exceed 15% of the donor's total blood volume, with unacceptable risks of hypovolaemia and/or vasovagal issues.

Obesity ~~also~~ makes it desirable to use more than a donor's weight to estimate their blood volume. Fat contains far less blood as a proportion of its weight

than muscle. In obese individuals, the blood volume can be seriously overestimated from weight alone. Overestimating a donor's blood volume makes it more likely that they will have an adverse incident.

Donors who are overweight or obese tend to have more moderate to severe pain with PBSC donation. Bone marrow harvest is technically a considerably more difficult procedure in overweight donors. There is much evidence to support the concept that the morbidly obese in general (i.e. with a BMI >35) have a higher risk of premature death, anaesthetic complications and occult cardiovascular disease.

However, it is recognised that a high BMI does not always reflect obesity and body habitus and many high BMI donors may be fit and suitable to donate.

2. Weight loss medication

Guidelines affected	Reason for change
Bone marrow	This is a new entry.

Essential information

<u>Includes</u>	<u>Oral or injectable drugs for management of weight loss.</u>
<u>Excludes</u>	<u>Causes of obesity or related comorbidities. Donors with these conditions must be assessed using the relevant entries.</u>
<u>Obligatory</u>	1. <u>Oral medication</u> <u>Must not donate if:</u> a. <u>The medication used is itself a reason for deferral, or</u> b. <u>The donor is experiencing significant side-effects.</u> 2. <u>Injectable medication</u> <u>Must not donate if:</u> a. <u>Injectable medication has not been prescribed for the donor by a registered prescriber and/or has been obtained from a non-licensed source, or</u> b. <u>The donor is not using the medication as prescribed (e.g. sharing medication vials, pens or injection equipment with other users), or</u> c. <u>The donor is experiencing significant side-effects.</u> <u>Bone marrow donors only:</u> <u>Anaesthetics staff must be informed well before the proposed date of bone marrow harvest, and usually at the time of initial clinical assessment, if the donor is taking a glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1) agonist drug, e.g. tirzepatide (Mounjaro®) or semaglutide (Wegovy®), due to the risk of delayed gastric emptying.</u>
<u>Discretionary</u>	<u>If:</u> 1. <u>The medication is not in itself a reason for deferral, and</u> 2. <u>The donor does not have significant side-effects, and</u>

3. [The medication has been prescribed for the donor by a registered prescriber and obtained from a licensed source, and](#)
4. [The donor is not sharing medication vials, pens or injection equipment, accept.](#)

Supporting information

See if relevant

- [Diabetes mellitus](#)
- [Tissues safety](#)

Additional information

[Several treatments for weight loss are licensed for use by the NHS including the oral medication orlistat \(Alli®, Xenical®\) and the injectable medications tirzepatide \(Mounjaro®\), liraglutide \(Saxenda®\) and semaglutide \(Wegovy®\). Donors prescribed any of these through an NHS provider can be accepted provided they are well and are using the medication correctly. It is important to check the entry for any underlying health conditions that the donor may have. Donors who are diabetic should be assessed using the 'Diabetes mellitus' entry.](#)

[Patients who are not eligible for NHS treatment may obtain weight loss medications from private providers. As long as the treatment has been prescribed by a registered healthcare professional and issued through a licensed pharmacy, the donor can be accepted. Donors who have obtained injectable medication from a non-licensed source \(including from friends or family\) should not be accepted. It is important that donors who may be sharing medication vials, pens or injecting equipment are not accepted.](#)

[Donors who have acquired treatments online can be accepted provided they meet the conditions outlined above. If staff are unsure whether a provider meets these criteria, refer to a Designated Clinical Support Officer.](#)

[Glucagon-like peptide-1 \(GLP-1\) agonist drugs, such as semaglutide \(Wegovy®\) and tirzepatide \(Mounjaro®\), can cause delayed gastric emptying. Bone marrow donors taking these drugs may require longer pre-operative periods of fasting than would otherwise be the case, so anaesthetics staff must be informed well in advance of the planned date of bone marrow harvest.](#)

3. Weight loss medication

Guidelines affected	Reason for change
Cord blood	This is a new entry.

Essential information

<u>Includes</u>	<u>Oral or injectable drugs for management of weight loss.</u>
<u>Excludes</u>	<u>Causes of obesity or related comorbidities. Donors with these conditions must be assessed using the relevant entries.</u>
<u>Obligatory</u>	1. <u>Oral medication</u> <u>Must not donate if:</u> a. <u>The medication used is itself a reason for deferral, or</u> b. <u>The donor is experiencing significant side-effects.</u> 2. <u>Injectable medication</u> <u>Must not donate if:</u> a. <u>Injectable medication has not been prescribed for the donor by a registered prescriber and/or has been obtained from a non-licensed source, or</u> b. <u>The donor is not using the medication as prescribed (e.g. sharing medication vials, pens or injection equipment with other users), or</u> c. <u>The donor is experiencing significant side-effects.</u>
<u>Discretionary</u>	<u>If:</u> 1. <u>The medication is not in itself a reason for deferral, and</u> 2. <u>The donor does not have significant side-effects, and</u> 3. <u>The medication has been prescribed for the donor by a registered prescriber and obtained from a licensed source, and</u> 4. <u>The donor is not sharing medication vials, pens or injection equipment, accept.</u>

Supporting information

See if relevant

- [Diabetes mellitus](#)
- [Tissues safety](#)

Additional information

[Several treatments for weight loss are licensed for use by the NHS including the oral medication orlistat \(Alli®, Xenical®\) and the injectable medications tirzepatide \(Mounjaro®\), liraglutide \(Saxenda®\) and semaglutide \(Wegovy®\). Donors prescribed any of these through an NHS provider can be accepted provided they are well and are using the medication correctly. It is important to check the entry for any underlying health conditions that the donor may have. Donors who are diabetic should be assessed using the 'Diabetes mellitus' entry.](#)

[Patients who are not eligible for NHS treatment may obtain weight loss medications from private providers. As long as the treatment has been prescribed by a registered healthcare professional, and issued through a licensed pharmacy, the donor can be accepted. Donors who have obtained injectable medication from a non-licensed source \(including from friends or family\) should not be accepted. It is important that donors who may be sharing medication vials, pens or injecting equipment are not accepted.](#)

[Donors who have acquired treatments online can be accepted provided they meet the conditions outlined above. If staff are unsure whether a provider meets these criteria, refer to a Designated Clinical Support Officer.](#)

4. Weight loss medication

Guidelines affected	Reason for change
Tissue (deceased)	This is a new entry.
Tissue (live)	

Essential information

<u>Includes</u>	<u>Oral or injectable drugs for management of weight loss</u>
<u>Obligatory</u>	1. <u>Oral medication</u> <u>Must not donate if:</u> <u>Within the last 3 months, one or both of the following apply:</u> a. <u>The donor used medication that had not been prescribed for them by a healthcare practitioner licensed to prescribe.</u> b. <u>The donor used medication that had been obtained from a non-licensed source.</u> 2. <u>Injectable medication</u> <u>Must not donate if:</u> <u>Within the last 3 months, one or more of the following apply:</u> a. <u>The donor used medication had not been prescribed for them by a healthcare practitioner licensed to prescribe.</u> b. <u>The donor used medication that had been obtained from a non-licensed source.</u> c. <u>The donor had shared medication vials, pens or injection equipment with other users.</u>
<u>Discretionary</u>	1. <u>Oral medication</u> <u>Accept if:</u> a. <u>Neither of the conditions below apply, or</u> b. <u>Either or both of the conditions below apply, but the activity was greater than 3 months ago:</u> i. <u>The donor used medication that had not been prescribed for them by a healthcare practitioner licensed to prescribe.</u>

- ii. The donor used medication that had not been obtained from a licensed source.

2. Injectable medication

Accept if:

- a. None of the conditions below apply, or
- b. One or more of the conditions below apply, but the activity was greater than 3 months ago:
 - i. The donor used medication that had not been prescribed for them by a healthcare practitioner licensed to prescribe.
 - ii. The donor used medication that had been obtained from a non-licensed source.
 - iii. The donor had shared medication vials, pen or injection equipment with other users.

Supporting information

See if relevant

- Tissues safety

Additional information

Several treatments for weight loss are licensed for use by the NHS including the oral medication orlistat (Alli®, Xenical®) and the injectable medications tirzepatide (Mounjaro®), liraglutide (Saxenda®) and semaglutide (Wegovy®). Other medications may also be licensed in different countries. Donors prescribed licensed medications through an NHS provider (or an equivalent licensed provider in their home country if the donor is a visitor to the UK) can be accepted provided they are/were using the medication correctly.

Patients who are not eligible for NHS treatment may obtain weight loss medications from private providers. As long as the treatment has been prescribed by a registered healthcare professional and issued through a licensed pharmacy, the donor can be accepted.

Donors who have used injectable medication from a non-licensed source (including from friends or family), or who may have shared medication vials, pens or injecting equipment, should be deferred for at least 3 months from last use of the medication; this time period is being applied using the precautionary principle.

Donors who have purchased treatments online can be accepted provided they meet the conditions outlined above.