Change Notification for the UK Blood and Tissue Services

Notification date 16 November 2026
Effective date 14 December 2026
Implementation To be determined by each Service

CN 49-2026

Viral haemorrhagic fever

	Content changed	Type of change	Guidelines affected
1	Viral haemorrhagic fever (VHF)	Updated entry	**Bone marrow** **Cord blood**

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

1. Viral haemorrhagic fever (VHF)

Guidelines affected	Reason for change
Bone marrow **Cord blood**	In accordance with advice from SaBTO and as approved by SACTTI, the guidance for 'Contact with an affected individual or travel to endemic country' has been aligned with that for whole blood and component donors.

Essential information

Definition/s	**Viral Haemorrhagic Fever Endemic Areas** are shown in the 'Geographical Disease Risk Index' (GDRI) as a Viral Haemorrhagic Fever Risk.
Includes	Crimean-Congo Fever, Ebola Virus Disease, Lassa Fever, Marburg Fever.

Scenarios

▼ Affected individual

Obligatory	**Must not donate if:** Has ever been infected.

▼ Contact with an affected individual or travel to endemic country

Obligatory	**Must not donate if:** Less than 6 months from last contact with an affected individual or travel to an endemic country. ~~*1. Was present in an area during an active outbreak.*~~ ~~*2. Under investigation for viral haemorrhagic fever.*~~ ~~*3. Has been in contact with an individual who was present in an area during an active outbreak.*~~ ~~*4. Was in contact with an individual infected with, or was under investigation for viral haemorrhagic fever.*~~ ~~*5. Less than 6 months after return to UK from an endemic area when there was no active outbreak.*~~ Under exceptional circumstances, the donor may be accepted subject to individual risk assessment. Refer to Designated Clinical Support Officer. See **Additional information** below.

Discretionary	**Accept if:** More than 6 months from last contact, completion of investigations or return to the UK from an endemic country. ~~1. If more than 6 months after return to UK from an endemic area when there was no active outbreak at the time of visit.~~ 2. ~~If the individual, or the contact person, under investigation had viral haemorrhagic fever infection excluded as diagnosis.~~

▼ Sexual partner of an affected individual

Obligatory	**Must not donate if:** The donor has had sex with an individual who had been diagnosed with a viral haemorrhagic fever at any time before their last sexual contact.

Supporting information

See if relevant	• 'Geographical Disease Risk Index' for countries with a current endemic VHF risk
Additional information	These infections have very high death rates and there is evidence that the virus may persist for some time after recovery. The 2014–2016 outbreak of Ebola in West Africa had increased understanding about the persistence of the virus in affected individuals and the number of asymptomatic individuals who may be able to transmit the virus to others. There is no routine screening test for Ebola Virus (EBOV) currently available. There is an option to test donors serologically for the presence of anti-EBOV (antibodies) 2 months after the exposure event if a test becomes available. A reactive test would result in permanent deferral, a negative test would allow donation to proceed. Designated Clinical Support Officers may seek expert advice where necessary, under exceptional circumstances. There is evidence of persistent virus in individuals who recover from several forms of viral haemorrhagic fever. For this reason, it is necessary to defer the sexual partners of these individuals.