Change Notification for the UK Blood and Tissue Services

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

CN 53-2026

Tissues safety

	Content changed	Type of change	Guidelines affected
1	Tissues safety	Updated entry	**Tissue (deceased)** **Tissue (live)**

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

1. Tissues safety

Guidelines affected	Reason for change
Tissue (deceased) Tissue (live)	Explanatory text relating to individual risk criteria (FAIR) has been removed from the 'Obligatory' section, as it was causing confusion.

Essential information

Definition/s	**Individual risk** is based on the donor's sexual behaviour, including new partners and the number of partners in the 3 months prior to donation. **Partner risk** is based on sexual contact with a partner who may, at a population level, be at higher risk of acquiring infection, as described in this entry. **Sexual contact** is defined as oral, vaginal or anal sex. **Anal sex** is defined as penile-anal intercourse only. It does not apply to oro-anal sex or the use of sex toys. **Chemsex** is sex while using stimulant drugs taken for the specific purpose of enhancing sexual experience and reducing inhibitions. Chemsex does not refer to sex after using alcohol or recreational drugs for other purposes, nor the use of drugs (e.g. Viagra® or Cialis®) to treat erectile dysfunction.
Obligatory	Information must be provided so that those at risk do not donate. **1. You must not donate if:** You think you need a test for HIV/AIDS, HTLV or hepatitis. **2. You must never donate if:** a. You are HIV positive. b. You are HTLV positive. c. You are a hepatitis B carrier. d. You are a hepatitis C carrier. **3. You must not donate for at least 12 months:** After stopping habitual use of injected drugs of addiction.

4. **You must not donate for at least 3 months if:**

    a. You have taken pre-exposure prophlyaxis (PrEP) / Truvada by mouth to prevent HIV.

    b. You have taken or been prescribed post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) by mouth to prevent HIV.

    If the underlying reason for taking PrEP or PEP warrants a longer deferral period, this should be applied.

5. **You must not donate for at least 24 months if:**

    You have received PrEP as an injection to prevent HIV e.g. cabotegravir (Apretude®).

    If the underlying reason for taking PrEP or PEP warrants a longer deferral period, this should be applied.

6. **You must not donate for at least 3 months if:**

    a. You have received money or drugs for sex.

    b. You have injected, or been injected with, non-prescription drugs, even only once. This includes, for example, bodybuilding drugs or injectable tanning agents. You may be able to donate if a doctor prescribed the drugs. Please ask.

    c. You have injected, been injected with, or used non-parenteral Chemsex drugs.

7. **Individual risk criteria (FAIR):**

    You must not donate for at least 3 months if:

    a. You have taken part in chemsex activity, including the use of stimulant drugs. This risk applies for all sexual contact.

    b. You have been diagnosed with gonorrhoea. You must wait for at least three months after you have successfully completed treatment and been discharged from further follow-up.

    c. You have had more than one sexual partner in the last 3 months AND you have had anal sex with any of these partners.

    d. You have had anal sex with a new sexual partner. For the purpose of donor selection, a new partner is someone that you have not had sex with before or a previous partner with whom you have restarted a sexual relationship in the last 3 months.

    ~~*If you are in a sexual relationship with one partner only, you can donate once it is 3 months from the date of first sexual contact, even if you are having anal sex.*~~

8. **You must not donate for at least 3 months after sex (even if you used a condom or other protective) with:**

   A partner who is, or you think may be:

   a. HIV or HTLV positive.

   b. A hepatitis B carrier.

   c. A hepatitis C carrier.

   d. A partner who has received money or drugs for sex.

   e. A partner who has injected, or been injected with non-prescription drugs. This includes, for example, bodybuilding drugs or injected tanning agents. You may be able to give if a doctor prescribed the drugs, please ask.

Supporting information

See if relevant	• Addiction and drug abuse • Hepatitis B • Hepatitis C • Hepatitis of unknown origin • HIV • HTLV • Infection, general • Pre- and post-exposure prophylaxis for HIV prevention • Sexually transmitted disease • Syphilis
Additional information	The For the Assessment of Individualised Risk (FAIR) report (2020) recommended changes to blood donor selection policy to allow a more individualised risk-based approach. This approach was approved by ministers in devolved administrations and has now been implemented by the UK Transfusion Services. The FAIR III working group recommended that a similar approach could be applied to tissue and cell donors in principle, acknowledging that the current donor selection policies already permit an individual risk assessment approach for life saving tissues and cells.

FAIR identified several factors associated with a higher risk of blood borne infections. These include the recent diagnosis of a bacterial sexually transmitted disease and the following sexual behaviours:

- new or multiple sexual partners
- anal sex
- participation in chemsex activity

Drugs used for chemsex include methamphetamine, mephedrone and GHB/GBL, but other drugs may be used (e.g. ketamine, poppers, cocaine). Chemsex is a high risk activity because it usually involves multiple sexual partners, sometimes for extended periods of time. The drugs involved also reduce inhibition leading to riskier sexual activity.

The drugs used in both pre- and post-exposure prophylaxis for HIV (PrEP and PEP) may interfere with the routine HIV screening tests carried out on all tissue and cell donors. For this reason, donors who have taken oral PrEP or PEP in the previous 3 months, or received injectable PrEP in the previous 24 months, should not donate. This applies even if they are otherwise eligible under individual risk criteria.

The deferral periods specified above may be reduced by doing individual risk assessment if the risk of acquiring an infectious disease may be outweighed by the risk of delaying a lifesaving transplantation.