

Component

Function

Why might I need a transfusion?

Red blood cells

Carry essential oxygen which tissues and organs need to survive

Platelets

Small structures that help prevent or stop bleeding. No effective substitute exists. Patient who have low platelet levels or whose platelets do not functions properly may need a platelet transfusion

Plasma

Contains many substances, such as proteins, and is mainly used to treat a lack of factors that promote coagulation (blood clotting)

Other Blood Products

There are some other blood components/factors which are required only in special circumstances. Your doctor will discuss these with you if there is a likelihood that you will need them

- Your blood loss due to surgery, trauma or bleeding etc. is greater than 20% of your blood volume (more than about 1 litre)
- You are severely anemic (have very low haemoglobin)
- Your platelets or coagulation factors are low or not functioning properly