

Manitoba Transfusion Best Practice Resource Manual

Appendix 12 Visual Inspection of Blood Components and Plasma Protein Products

Applicable to all

Item	Visual Appearance/Acceptability Criteria	Action/Reporting
Expiry dates stickers/labels	Label must be present and in date.	Expired products or missing labels must be returned to blood bank. Contact transfusion service.
Segments	Sufficient segments to complete testing present and intact.	Missing segments must be reported to transfusion service. Product returned.
Packing/external covers	Intact and dry, no breaks or leaks. Any damage to external packaging is unacceptable for transfusion.	Contact transfusion service, return product.
Port covers	Intact. Exception: if product has been modified at least one port must be intact. Not acceptable if loose or open.	Contact transfusion service, return product.

Red Blood Cells

Item	Visual Appearance	Acceptability Criteria
Hemolysis	Loss of intact red cells results in bright cherry red color. Purple or black color is abnormal. Some degree of hemolysis is acceptable.	Contact transfusion service for darker color. Quarantine product if applicable.
Color of red cells is different than in segments	The color of red cells in blood bag and in segments should be similar.	Contact transfusion service for differences in color. Quarantine product.
Lipemia	Whitish to lighter shade of red with increased opacity. Acceptable to transfuse.	
Air bubbles	Excessive and unusual air bubbles may indicate bacterial contamination.	Contact transfusion service. Quarantine product.
Clots/Fibrin strands	Small to large red or purple masses that do not dissipate with mixing may indicate bacterial contamination.	Contact transfusion service. Quarantine product.
Cold agglutinins	Large red cell masses that do not dissipate with mixing.	Contact transfusion service. Quarantine product.
Cellular aggregates	White and opaque masses that do not dissipate with mixing.	Contact transfusion service. Quarantine product.
White particulate matter	Non cellular lipid-rich material that appears white in color and variable in shape from flattened specks to a greasy film. It may dissipate with a change in temperature and is a normal constituent of blood.	

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	Acceptable to transfuse.	
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Platelets

Item	Visual Appearance	Acceptability Criteria
Red cell contamination on Platelets	Only applicable to the Rh negative females less than 45 years of age when transfusing Rh positive platelets to an Rh negative recipient.	TM Medical Director approval is needed. Document consult in the appropriate blood bank log.
Plasma color is bright red	Some degree of hemolysis is acceptable. Bright red color indicates significant hemolysis.	Contact transfusion service. Quarantine product.
Discolored plasma	Greyish murky color, purple or brown may indicate bacterial contamination. Color variations may occur due to icterus (yellow), oral contraceptive use (green), vitamin A or consumption of carrots (orange). These are acceptable for transfusion.	Contact transfusion service. Quarantine product.
Air bubbles	Excessive and unusual air bubbles may indicate bacterial contamination.	Contact transfusion service. Quarantine product.
Clots/Fibrin strands	Small to large red or purple masses that do not dissipate with mixing may indicate bacterial contamination.	Contact transfusion service. Quarantine product.
Lipemia	Whitish to lighter shade of red with increased opacity. Acceptable to transfuse.	
Cellular aggregates	White and opaque masses that do not dissipate with mixing.	Contact transfusion service. Quarantine product.
White particulate matter	Non cellular lipid-rich material that appears white in color and variable in shape from flattened specks to a greasy film. It may dissipate with a change in temperature and is a normal constituent of blood. Acceptable to transfuse.	

Plasma Protein Products

Item	Visual Appearance	Acceptability Criteria
Product appears cloudy	Cloudiness may indicate bacterial contamination or presence of particulate matter.	Contact transfusion service. Quarantine product.
Air bubbles	Excessive and unusual air bubbles may indicate bacterial contamination.	Contact transfusion service. Quarantine product.