

In Italy, blood donation and blood collection are Basic Healthcare Services (Italian Law No. 219/2005) aimed to ensure transfusions to more than 1800 patients everyday nationwide.

The Ministry of Health recommends to take the following measures:

- strengthen surveillance measures on possible imported cases by activating blood donor medical history surveillance for travels to the Republic of China;
- strengthen surveillance measures on possible positive cases for contacts with persons with documented SARS-CoV-2 infection;
- strengthen surveillance measures asking the donor if he/she has already complied with the obligation of home isolation/quarantine, when appropriate;
- apply the criterion of 14 days temporary deferral of donors who have travelled in the Republic of China;
- apply the criterion of 14 days temporary deferral after a potential exposure to the risk of transmission by getting into-contact with persons with documented SARS-CoV-2 infection;
- apply the criterion of temporary deferral of at least 14 days after the resolution of the symptoms or from the interruption of any therapy for SARS-CoV-2 positive donors (documented infection or symptoms compatible with SARSCoV-2 infection);
- raise donors awareness on the importance to promptly report to the blood collection unit any symptoms compatible with SARSCoV-2 infection or in case of SARS-CoV2 diagnosis in the 14 days following the donation (post-donation information);
- recommend to the staff of the hospital collection units and to the staff of the collection units run by the voluntary blood donors associations to timely respect the indications aimed to prevent the spread of respiratory infections, including SARS-CoV-2.

Furthermore, in order to both avoid donors overcrowding in the waiting rooms and respect the interpersonal safety distance (at least 1 meter), it is recommended:

- preferably call donors to schedule the donation in order to regulate donors flow; as for the prevention of the risk caused by the exposure to a COVID-19 infected person, please refer to the definition of "close contact" made by the ECDC and the Ministry of Health;
- adopt preliminary triage measures, when the donor is contacted by phone;
- promote the implementation of triage process in donors reception, including the extemporaneous measurement of body temperature. The activation of triage is aimed at both avoiding the possible spread of the virus in the waiting rooms and implementing donors pre-selection. The body temperature value of 37.5 ° C is suggested as a temporary donor deferral recruitment;

- regularly manage donors flow in blood collection units as well as during donation.

To the voluntary blood donor associations and federations, it is also recommended:

- do not interrupt blood and blood components collection at both hospital collection units and voluntary blood donors associations collection units nationwide;
- ensure that the staff is adequately and constantly informed on SARS-COV2 epidemiology as well as on the measures taken to prevent its transmission by labile blood components transfusions;
- ensure the constant dissemination of the indications provided by the Ministry of Health on sanitation and disinfection of the environments
- provide the staff with disinfectant solutions for hand hygiene;
- ensure the mobility of the staff of the voluntary blood donors associations.

In this context, the Authorities in synergy with all the actors involved in the blood system (locally, regionally and nationally) are also strategically working on the promotion of blood donation ensuring the general public (blood community) towards its safety by setting up dedicated communication material (posters, messages through the social media etc.).