Mosby's Nursing Video Skills

Procedure Guideline for Preparing for a Transfusion

1. Verify the health care provider’s orders, and that the patient has signed a consent form.
2. Assess patient lab values.
3. Gather the necessary equipment and supplies.
4. Perform hand hygiene, and provide for the patient’s privacy.
5. Introduce yourself to the patient and family, if present.
6. Identify the patient using two identifiers. Misidentification of the patient is one of the most important factors in transfusion errors, and you will confirm the identity of the patient several times as you prepare to administer blood product.
7. Explain the procedure to the patient, and why a transfusion is necessary.
8. Assess the patency of the IV that will be used.
9. Obtain vital signs of the patient, including temperature, blood pressure, and pulse. Use these vital signs as a baseline.
10. Pre-administration protocol:
   A. Obtain the blood component from the blood bank according to your agency’s protocol. The blood transfusion must be initiated within 30 minutes after the blood is released from the laboratory or the blood bank.
   B. Check the blood bag for any signs of leaks or contamination, such as clumping, clots, gas bubbles, or a purplish discoloration.
   C. Before initiating the transfusion, verbally compare and verify the patient’s identity with the blood product and type. Have another person considered qualified by your agency, such as an RN or LPN, confirm the patient’s identity as well. Check the following:
      (1) Identify the patient using two identifiers, according to your agency’s policy. Compare the identifiers in the MAR/medical record with the information on the patient’s identification bracelet, and/or ask the patient to state his or her name.
      (2) Make sure that the transfusion record number and the patient’s identification number match.
      (3) Make sure that the patient’s name is correct on all documents. Compare the identification number and the birth date on the patient’s identification band with the data on the blood requisition attached to the blood bag.
      (4) Check the unit number on the blood bag against the blood bank form to ensure they are the same.
      (5) Make sure the blood type is the same in the transfusion record and on the blood bag. Verify that the blood component received from the blood bank is the same component that the health care provider has ordered, such as packed red cells or platelets.
      (6) Confirm that the patient’s blood type and Rh type are compatible with the donor blood type and Rh, such as Patient A+; Donor A+ or O+.
      (7) Check the expiration date and the time on the unit of blood.
(8) Just before initiating the transfusion, check the patient identification information against the information on the label of the blood unit. Do not administer blood to a patient who is not wearing an identification bracelet.

(9) Make sure that both individuals who are checking the blood document the verification process as directed by your agency’s policy.

D. Review the purpose of the transfusion, and ask the patient to report any changes that he or she may feel during the transfusion.

E. Empty the urine drainage collection container, if present, or have the patient void.

11. Begin the transfusion as shown in the Video Skill “Initiating a Transfusion,” and monitor the patient closely for any sign of a transfusion-related reaction.

12. Help the patient into a comfortable position, and place toiletries and personal items within reach.

13. Place the call light within easy reach, and make sure the patient knows how to use it to summon assistance.

14. To ensure the patient’s safety, raise the appropriate number of side rails and lower the bed to the lowest position.

15. Dispose of used supplies and equipment. Leave the patient’s room tidy.


17. Document and report the patient’s response and expected or unexpected outcomes.