



# A guide to...

## Intra-operative cell salvage

### *Patient information*

#### How to contact us

Blood Transfusion: Clinical Support  
Watford General Hospital  
West Hertfordshire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust  
Vicarage Road, Watford, Hertfordshire, WD18 0HB

Tel: 01923 244 366

If you need this leaflet in another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call Communications on **01923 217198** or email **westherts.pals@nhs.net**



Author	Donna Beckford-Smith Lead Transfusion Practitioner
Department	Blood Transfusion Department
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## **What is Intra-Operative Cell Salvage?**

Cell Salvage is the process of recovering blood lost in surgery, filtering and processing it, and then returning it back to the same patient. The process can take 15-30 minutes, sometimes longer, and has the same rules, safety precautions and practices as donated blood transfusions.

## **How does it work?**

When blood is lost during surgery, the theatre staff will harvest the blood loss from the patient being operated on, to stop unwanted particles and fragments blocking the machine or going back to the patient. The blood goes through a sponge like filter; it is washed with saline and then re-infused back into the patient. This process is known as **Intra-operative cell salvage (IOCS)**.

## **Who is eligible?**

Only some types of surgery are appropriate for IOCS. A clinical decision will be made by the surgeon and anaesthetist, who will also consider the availability of the machine and operator.

## **When might intra-operative cell salvage be used?**

- Procedures with a higher risk of blood loss
- Patients with rare blood groups
- For religious beliefs or refusal of donated blood transfusions
- To supplement donated blood transfusions

## **When might cell salvage not be suitable for a patient?**

For certain types of procedures, such as bowel or gastric surgery.  
Any other contra-indications that may be updated or changed following national guidance.

## **Further information**

Ask your surgeon or the transfusion practitioner (TP) for further information.

Tel: **01923 436078** – for the TP Monday – Friday only

## **What about my faith, religion, or my right to refuse?**

The pastoral care team can support you in making a decision and ensure you are contacted by member of your faith.

Tel: **01923 217994**