What’s new with the 30-minute rule for red blood cells?

What changed?

Effective 2016, a change was made to the CSAZ902-15 standard 10.10.5. The length of time an RBC can be out of storage was extended from 30 minutes to 60 minutes.

Why the change?

The studies that led to the original 30-minute rule were conducted in the 1970s, when blood products were stored in containers (glass bottles) with or without additive solutions. This does not reflect current practices.

Recently, a research team led by Dr. Sandra Ramirez, a development scientist at Canadian Blood Services’ Centre for Innovation in Ottawa, studied bacteria-free and bacteria-spiked RBCs that were exposed to room temperature for various lengths of time, checking them for quality, temperature and bacterial growth. Results showed that exposing units to room temperature for up to 60 minutes several times during their shelf life did not reduce their quality or safety.

Support for the change

Canadian Blood Services conducted this research, in collaboration with Héma-Québec, and contributed to the Canadian Standards Association’s decision to extend the 30-minute rule to 60 minutes.

Read more

Doubling the 30-minute rule without compromising RBC quality and safety

Dr. Ramirez explains....


Refresh your knowledge!

Review the definitions for reporting blood component disposition in the Blood Component and Product Disposition System –User Guide:

Disposition for red cells that are out of storage for more than 60 minutes should be recorded under ‘Discarded - Improper Storage’.

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