

Mislabeled blood samples will not be accepted

On Monday, October 10, 2022, New Zealand Blood Service (NZBS) is launching a campaign – Check Twice, Label Once – to educate staff about the importance of correctly labelling blood samples to ensure the safety of patients requiring a transfusion.

This will be conducted ahead of a national change that will affect those collecting and sending blood samples to NZBS Blood Banks. Under this new policy, NZBS will no longer allow errors on the sample label and/or request form to be corrected by the person who collected the sample.

New criteria - label it correct or re-collect

From Monday, November 7, 2022, all blood sample labels must be handwritten and contain the following information:

- The patient's family name and given name
- The patient's NHI and date of birth
- The date and time the sample was collected
- The signature or initials of the person collecting the blood sample.

Mislabeled blood samples cover the following scenarios:

- Sample or request form have incomplete, incorrect or misspelled patient information
- Sample or request form are missing information or signatures/initials
- Sample has a patient sticky label attached to it
- Sample has only the patient's NHI or date of birth.

The patient will need to be re-bled if the blood sample is rejected due to being mislabelled.

Every year, New Zealand's Blood Banks handle more than 130,000 blood samples of patients requiring transfusions. Roughly two percent of samples currently sent to NZBS Blood Banks are mislabelled blood samples that can be corrected under the current policy, while another two percent are rejected immediately. We receive a wrong blood in tube (WBIT) – a sample labelled for patient A, but with the blood coming from patient B – several times a month. This has the potential for the wrong transfusion product being issued to the patient, causing an ABO-incompatible transfusion. And we know that mislabelled samples have a more than 100-fold increased risk of being a WBIT.

The Check Twice, Label Once campaign aims to reduce the number of mislabelled blood samples before the changes to the sample labelling criteria take effect, ensuring minimal disruption to all involved, and get staff in the habit of double checking labels and forms before sending samples to NZBS Blood Banks.



For more information, scan the QR code.

Check Twice
Label Once