

# Prothrombin complex concentrate injection to treat or prevent a severe bleed

Department of Haematology

Information for Patients

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## What is prothrombin complex concentrate (PCC)?

PCC is a mixture of proteins found in human blood. They cause the blood to clot when you need it to. The proteins are called clotting factors. PCC is a blood product that is made from the liquid part (plasma) of blood donated by many people. It has been specially treated. We give it as an injection into a vein.

## Why am I being offered PCC?

You have been taking a medicine that is ‘thinning’ your blood. This kind of medicine either

- stops your body from making clotting factors (for example, **warfarin**) or
- stops the clotting factors from working properly (for example, **rivaroxaban**, **apixaban** or **edoxaban**).

Usually, you need to take those blood thinners to keep you healthy. They treat or prevent health problems such as blood clots in your lungs or legs, or a stroke that could be caused by an irregular heart beat.

But at the moment, you are in hospital with serious bleeding or are at high risk of bleeding. So your doctors have decided to give you PCC. It has all the clotting factors you need to reverse the effect of your blood-thinning medicine. After the injection, your blood will clot normally again straight away.

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## Does PCC have any side effects?

There are a few possible side effects. The risk of all of them is quite small.

- As PCC restores the ability of your blood to clot, it might cause an abnormal blood clot (known as a thrombosis), for example in one of your legs. This is thought to affect between 1 in 100 and 1 in 10 people.
- **Allergic reactions** to PCC are seen in between 1 in 10,000 and 1 in 1000 people. When you get treated with PCC, we will check you closely for this kind of reaction over the first few hours. And we will treat you quickly and effectively if it happens.
- Less than 1 in 10,000 people have a brief **rise in their body temperature** (or fever). This can last from minutes to a few hours at most. It does not cause any harm.
- We cannot totally rule out the risk of getting a **virus infection** from the blood donations that were used to make PCC. But every plasma donation is carefully tested for known viruses. All clotting factor concentrates go through a special procedure to remove certain viruses. Also, PCC is heated (pasteurised) to stop any other viruses from being harmful. All of this means that the actual risk of a virus infection is so small that it is impossible to express it in numbers.
- The same is true for **mad cow disease** (also known as 'variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease', or vCJD). Again, the risk is so small that it cannot be put into numbers.

Hospitals have used PCC and other similar clotting factor concentrates for many years. They have safely helped many thousands of patients.

If you have any more questions about PCC, please speak to your team of hospital doctors.

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