

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 that make it clot when necessary (known as clotting factors). It is a blood product that is made from the liquid part (plasma) of blood donated by many people, which has been specially treated. It is given to you by an injection into a vein.

Why am I being offered PCC?

You have been taking a prescription 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, thinning your blood in that way is necessary to keep you healthy. It treats or prevents conditions 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. Because of this, your doctors have decided to give you PCC as it contains all the clotting factors needed to reverse the effect of your blood-thinning medicine. After the injection, your blood will clot normally again straight away.

Does PCC have any side effects?

There are several possible side effects, but 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.

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- **Allergic reactions** to PCC are seen in between 1 in 10,000 and 1 in 1000 people. When you receive PCC, we will observe you closely for this kind of reaction over the first few hours so that we can treat you rapidly 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 and does not cause any harm.
- The risk of getting a **virus infection** from the blood donations that were used to make PCC cannot be totally left out. But as a precaution, every plasma donation is carefully tested for known viruses, and all clotting factor concentrates go through a special procedure to remove certain viruses. Also, PCC is heated (pasteurised) to stop any remaining 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.

All in all, PCC and other similar clotting factor concentrates have been used for many years and helped many thousands of patients.

If you have any further questions about PCC that you wish to cover, please speak to your team of hospital doctors.

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Previous reference:

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