



# THE SCOTTISH OFFICE

## Home and Health Department

TO: ALL GENERAL PRACTITIONERS

Dear Doctor

### HEPATITIS C (HCV) AND BLOOD TRANSFUSION

The Government is today announcing a lookback exercise to identify recipients of blood and blood products who may have been infected with HCV. As all blood donations in the UK have been tested for HCV since September 1991 only patients transfused prior to that date are at risk. Even before that date the risk of infection is small for any individual recipient.

Blood transfusion centres will be checking to see whether donors found to be infected by HCV had given blood in the past. Where this is the case, a thorough search of the records will be carried out with the aim of identifying recipients of the blood and offering them counselling and testing for the virus. Details of the procedures involved, together with guidance on management of recipients found to be HCV positive, is now being drawn up by an expert working group. A helpline has been set up for members of the public who want further information about HCV and blood transfusion and the lookback exercise. The number is 0800 71 61 97. The helpline will sift enquiries, and where appropriate direct members of the public to the Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service, or if essential to their GPs for further information. In any case, it is likely that some patients will turn to their GPs for information and reassurance. We are therefore sending you a copy of the questions and answers provided for the helpline, together with some background information which you may find useful in dealing with patients' queries.

Yours sincerely

GRO-C

R E KENDELL

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## From the Chief Medical Officer

Dr R E Kendell CBE MD  
FRSE

St. Andrew's House  
Edinburgh EH1 3DG  
Telephone **GRO-C**  
Fax **GRO-C**

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For action

CAMOs/DPH of Health  
Boards

For information

General Managers  
Medical Directors of Trusts

Further enquiries

Dr A Keel  
Room 118  
St Andrew's House  
Edinburgh  
EH1 3DG  
Tel: **GRO-C**