



MEMORANDUM

Date: December 15, 2022

To: The Honorable Chair and Members
Pima County Board of Supervisors

From: Jan Leshner 
County Administrator

Re: **Misinformation about COVID-19 Impacts on Blood Supply**

During the Board of Supervisors meeting of December 6, 2022, a comment was made during the Call to the Public that questioned the safety of the blood supply due to COVID-19 and its vaccine. Attached please find a brief report from Dr. Theresa Cullen that addresses some of these claims.

To be clear, the safety of the blood supply has not been compromised by COVID-19 infection or vaccination.

JKL/anc

Attachment

c: Francisco García, MD, MPH, Deputy County Administrator and Chief Medical Officer
Terry Cullen, MD, MS, Public Health Director, Pima County Health Department

Date: December 13, 2022

To: Francisco Garcia
Deputy County Administrator

From: Theresa Cullen, MD, MS 
Health Department Director

Re: Addressing Misinformation About COVID-19 Impacts on Blood Supply

In response to your request received on December 9, 2022, the Pima County Health Department (PCHD) is aware of misinformation circulating on some social media platforms that falsely claim that people who get the COVID-19 vaccine cannot donate blood because the vaccine “wipes out” natural antibodies. Other false claims state that the US blood supply is tainted due to donors who have been vaccinated for COVID-19.

It is important that members of the public, health care providers and community leaders recognize these claims as misinformation and continue to have confidence in our blood supply. Moreover, currently there is a shortage of blood across the country and this type of misinformation may negatively impact the supply for people in need of blood transfusions whose lives depend on it. The department has prepared the following questions and answers addressing these concerns to assist community leaders and members of the public in countering this misinformation. The PCHD encourages people to consider donating blood at this time to guarantee adequate supply and reassures the community that the blood supply is safe and vital to our health care system.

Q: Is there risk of contamination of the blood supply resulting from COVID-19 vaccines?

A: No, the COVID-19 vaccine is injected into muscle below the skin and does NOT circulate in the blood. According to the Director of biomedical communications with the American Red Cross “While the antibodies that are produced by the stimulated immune system in response to vaccination are found throughout the bloodstream, the actual vaccine components are not.” ([source](#))

Q: Who oversees and regulates the U.S. blood supply?

A: The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is responsible for overseeing and regulating the U.S. blood supply. ([source](#)) The Food and Drug Administration has determined that there is NO safety risk, and no reason to label units of donated blood according to whether the donor was vaccinated or not.

Q: Does the American Red Cross allow individuals who have received COVID-19 vaccinations to donate blood and convalescent plasma?

A: Yes, as long as they know what type of vaccine they received and they are not experiencing any COVID-like symptoms. There is no required wait time after receiving the vaccine before donating blood or plasma. ([source](#))

Q: Is there risk of contracting COVID-19 from a blood transfusion?

A: Respiratory viruses, such as COVID-19, influenza or RSV are NOT spread by blood transfusions. There have been no reported COVID-19 cases transmitted by blood. ([source](#)) Additionally, donated blood must be quarantined until it is tested and shown to be free of infectious agents. ([source](#))