

This occurs when bacteria have contaminated the blood products and is also known as septicemia. Patients will often have a rapid onset of chills, high fever, warm skin, vomiting, diarrhea, and severe hypotension, which may lead to shock.

Transfusion-Related Acute Lung Injury (TRALI)

Trolley Lungs

This may occur as white blood cells release cytokines which increases capillary leakage. This increases the amount of fluid in the lungs causing noncardiogenic pulmonary edema. The pulmonary fluid causes frothy sputum, dyspnea, and eventually hypoxemia and respiratory failure. Patients may also have a fever and hypotension.

Massive Blood Transfusion

Massive-amounts of Blood Transfusion-IV

Electrolyte disturbances are the major concern for patients who receive large volumes of blood via transfusion. Citrate is a compound added to blood products to prevent coagulation prior to administration. In large volume transfusions citrate toxicity can lead to transient hypocalcemia. While blood products are stored, the red blood cells may leak potassium and when infused cause hyperkalemia. If the blood products are not warmed prior to administration, the patient may experience hypothermia.