

ABO blood groups

There are four main blood groups in the ABO blood group system: A, B, AB or O, which are inherited from both parents.

arteries

Blood vessels that transport blood containing oxygen away from the heart to the rest of the body.

blood donor

A person who gives their blood to be used for transfusions and other medical treatments.

blood groups

Blood can be grouped according to special markers (antigens) found on the surface of red blood cells. There are 33 different blood group systems; the ABO blood groups are one of the most important.

blood pressure

The force exerted by the heart when pumping blood.

blood vessels

Tubes that help to transport blood around the body. There are three main types of blood vessels: the arteries, the veins and the capillaries.

capillaries

Very small blood vessels, that connect arteries to veins and deliver oxygen to all parts of the body.

circulation

The movement of blood around the body.

heart

A fist-sized muscular organ which pumps blood through blood vessels around the body.

intravenous

The process of adding a liquid substance directly into someone’s vein.

platelet

Blood cells which help the blood to clot. Their job is to clump together, blocking holes and stopping bleeding.

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plasma

A pale yellow liquid that forms the greatest proportion of blood. It carries and supports the blood cells and platelets as well as carrying hormones, nutrients and other proteins.

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red blood cells

Blood cells that bind to and carry oxygen from the lungs and deliver it to the body's organs and tissues.

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transfusion

A medical procedure where blood is given intravenously to a person (a recipient) who needs it following surgery or injury.

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vein

Blood vessels that typically transport deoxygenated blood from capillaries in the body's organs and tissues back to the heart.

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white blood cells

Blood cells that circulate in the blood, helping to fight infections from bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites.

