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Every one of us has something unique and very precious: our blood. If we get sick, if we need an operation, if we become a patient. Before considering a transfusion, our own blood should be managed, preserved and optimised. This is a medical approach known as the Three Pillars of Patient Blood Management.

First, manage your own blood before a procedure and bring it up to optimum condition. It's important to see your doctor to check that you are fit for surgery. If you're anaemic before surgery, you may need treatment with iron or other medications.

Second, preserve your own blood during treatment by minimising blood losses. Talk to your medical team about the techniques they'll use to reduce any blood loss. And third, optimise and support your blood reserves and tolerance of anaemia. Your doctor will provide support while your body recovers. You may be given iron or other medications to help your body replace its own blood after a procedure.

Patient blood management has been described as "the new standard", a "must-have for all modern healthcare systems," and "a holistic approach that puts the patient before the product". Patient blood management is endorsed by the World Health Organization and is supported by the National Blood Authority of Australia. Patient blood management improves outcomes for patients.

In a recent study of over 600,000 medical and surgical patients, a patient blood management program was associated with reduced hospital mortality by 28%, hospital infections down by 21%, heart attacks and strokes by 31%, and reduced average hospital length of stay by 15%. The same program was also associated with an estimated \$80 to 100 million reduction in blood-related costs in the healthcare system.

Patient blood management improves outcomes and reduces costs. Isn't this the sort of care you deserve?

Connect now with the Australian National Blood Authority for more information on patient blood management.