

## Can Albumex® cause any adverse effects?

Side effects from Albumex® are rare. Reported side effects in some people are:

- An allergy to one of the proteins present in Albumex®. It will be necessary to stop the treatment if this occurs.
- Rarely a fall in blood pressure may occur during Albumex® infusion. This problem may be more common in people who are taking certain medicines (ACE inhibitors) used to treat high blood pressure.

## Does Albumex® ever fail to give the expected benefits?

- Albumex® treatment will produce a temporary increase in the amount of albumin in the body:
  - The effect will last for a few weeks if Albumex® is given because the liver is not making enough albumin.
  - The effect will only last for a few days if Albumex® is given because the body is losing albumin.

The short duration of the effect is an expected outcome.

- Treatment with Albumex® does not cure or treat the underlying cause of albumin deficiency. It is given to stop adverse effects from a lack of albumin.
- If the dose of Albumex® is too small the expected effect may not be achieved.
- Where complex disorders are present the beneficial effect from Albumex® may not be as great as desired due to the effect of other conditions.

Your Doctor will be able to discuss these and any related issues with you, if they arise.

This leaflet provides information about albumin and the commercial products Albumex® 4 and Albumex® 20 to help with informed consent before receiving this treatment. If you want more information please ask your Doctor.

# Albumex® 4 and Albumex® 20



Your guide  
to blood  
transfusion

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**You have been given this leaflet because your Doctor considers you may need treatment with Albumin.**

**As with any treatment you have the right to decide whether you want to have the treatment or not. You will be asked to sign a Consent Form to show that:**

- the benefits, risks and alternatives for your treatment, including transfusion of blood products, have been explained to you,
- you have been able to ask any questions about the treatment, and
- you agree to receive the treatment.

*This leaflet answers common questions about the albumin products: Albumex® 4 and Albumex® 20.*

### **What is Albumin and what does it do?**

- Albumin is a normal protein in blood.
- Albumin is important for helping to manage the distribution of water and other substances in the body.

**Note:** The term *albumin* in this leaflet refers only to *human albumin*.

### **What is Albumex®?**

- Albumex® is the trade name for purified albumin made from blood donations given by voluntary New Zealand blood donors. It is manufactured for the New Zealand Blood Service by CSL Behring, Melbourne, Australia.
- Albumin for the manufacture of Albumex® is obtained by a carefully controlled process from blood donations.

- Albumex® 4 has a similar protein content to blood. Albumex® 20 is a concentrated product.
- Albumex® undergoes special treatment to prevent many viral infections from being transmitted.

### **How is Albumex® given?**

- Albumex® is injected as a steady infusion into a vein. The amount given and the time needed for each infusion depends on the condition treated.
- It is usual practice to monitor any person receiving Albumex®.

### **What conditions are treated with Albumex®?**

#### **Albumex® 4 is usually used for these conditions:**

- Replacement of blood volume after severe bleeding. Albumin will be only one of the fluids given to treat the blood loss.
- Plasma exchange treatment is given for many uncommon or rare disorders. Albumin is one of the fluids commonly used to replace the plasma removed. (Plasma is the liquid part of blood.)

#### **Albumex® 20 is usually used for these conditions:**

- Very low levels of albumin caused by liver disorders. These include:
  - Cirrhosis, especially in people waiting for a liver transplant,
  - Acute problems affecting the liver directly or indirectly, including severe infections.
- Severe loss of albumin in the urine due to kidney disease.
- Low levels of albumin due to: loss from the bowel, or after extensive loss of skin from severe burns, or rarely, for other conditions.

**Albumex® is often combined with other treatment to obtain the best results for each person.**

### **Safety of Albumex® / Albumin**

- Albumin has a very good history of safety from infections over more than 50 years.
- But, because Albumin/Albumex® is a blood product it could theoretically pass on some infections.
- Important infections such as HIV/AIDS, hepatitis B and hepatitis C have never been spread by Albumin/Albumex® made by CSL Behring from blood donations, given by New Zealand donors.
- Blood donations are only collected from donors who are in good health and who do not have any conditions identifiable by standard checks on blood donors, that could be passed on to people receiving Albumex®.
- Every blood donation is tested for the infections: HIV/AIDS, hepatitis B and hepatitis C. Blood donations are only used if the tests show no evidence that these infections are present.
- The manufacturing process for making Albumex® is able to destroy these and many other viruses.
- There is no evidence that Creutzfeldt Jakob Disease (CJD) or variant CJD has ever been passed on by albumin products manufactured from human plasma.