

September 22, 2026



TRANSFUSION-RELATED ALPHA-GAL SYNDROME (TRAGS)

TRAGS is an emerging issue that relates to the transfusion of platelets and other plasma containing products from blood group B or AB donors to blood group O patients. This occurs because the alpha-gal antigen is structurally similar to the blood group B antigen. Patients who have anti-alpha-gal IgE antibodies may cross-react and recognize the B antigen, which manifests as an acute allergic transfusion reaction. As of July 5, 2026, all nine published cases of presumed TRAGS involved blood group O patients.

AABB recently released Association Bulletin #26-04 regarding TRAGS. Our region is considered a high-prevalence region for alpha-gal IgE antibodies. This Association Bulletin discusses several strategies that hospitals in high prevalence regions can adopt to help mitigate the risk of TRAGS.

One of these approaches includes developing **strategies in the hospital** to restrict B/AB platelets and plasma from being given to group O patients for routine transfusions. Please note that group A platelets are still acceptable, and that groups B and AB platelets can still be used for all other patient blood types. AABB is not endorsing hospitals to exclusively carry only group O or group A platelet units in inventory. It is not possible for blood centers to provide an increased quantity of group O platelets without dramatically reducing the O+ RBC inventory.

References

Cancelas J, BenAvram D. Transfusion-Related Alpha-Gal Syndrome. AABB Association Bulletin #26-04. August 25, 2026.