

From the Chief Medical Officer
Dr Michael McBride



Department of

**Health, Social Services
and Public Safety**

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AN ROINN

**Sláinte, Seirbhísí Sóisialta
agus Sábháilteachta Poiblí**

MÄNNYSTRIE O

**Poustie, Resydènter Heisin
an Fowk Siccar**

Castle Buildings
Stormont Estate
Belfast BT4 3SQ
Tel: 028 9052 0563
Fax: 028 9052 0574
Email: michael.mcbride@dhsspsni.gov.uk

HSS(MD)38/2008

For Action: All GPs
Directors of Primary Care – *for cascade to Out of Hours Centres*
Medical Directors HSC Trusts - *for cascade to Clinical Directors of A&E Services and Clinical Directors of Renal Services*

For info: Chief Executives HSC Trusts
Chief Executives HSS Boards
Directors of Public Health HSS Boards
Directors of Nursing HSC Trusts and Boards

Your Ref:
Our Ref: HSS(MD)38/2008
Date: 27 November 2008

Dear Colleague

RECENT INCREASE IN NORTHERN IRELAND OF RARE AND SERIOUS HAEMOLYSIS IN PATIENTS ON HAEMODIALYSIS

Since September 2008, a total of six patients have developed haemolysis following haemodialysis in 3 of the 6 dialysis units in Northern Ireland. The affected units are Daisy Hill, Belfast City and Antrim. All of the affected patients have recovered following treatment, but awareness of this potential problem in other haemodialysis patients and prompt assessment is required.

It is not clear which part of the dialysis process may have caused this problem, but a full investigation is underway involving external experts and equipment manufacturers.

Symptoms or Signs of Dialysis-related Haemolysis

Haemolysis is a recognised but rare complication of haemodialysis. It may cause symptoms during the dialysis process or within 12 hours of treatment. **Increased vigilance is essential.**

Symptoms and signs include:

- Feeling non-specifically unwell
- Chest or abdominal pain
- Nausea and vomiting
- Itch, flushing, shivering

