

Tainted blood prompts hospitals to cancel elective surgeries

Central Virginia hospitals canceled elective surgeries when Virginia Blood Services quarantined its blood supply for a day after the death of a transfusion recipient at the University of Virginia Medical Center. The blood bank asked the hospitals it serves throughout central Virginia to halt transfusions "unless it is a matter of life and death" while it investigated. University of Virginia officials said a bacterium commonly found in hospitals, *Klebsiella pneumoniae*, contributed to the death of a patient, whose immune system was weakened. The patient received 20 transfusions before dying Sept. 27. That death and the subsequent illnesses of two other transfusion recipients led officials to investigate the local blood supply. The blood bank subsequently quarantined 95 percent of its supply, then lifted the quarantine later when officials said they had determined the infection did not come from the blood supply.

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