

Changing Advice on Medical Practices

Vaccinations

Vaccinations were originally acceptable.

1921 - From 1921, a series of articles were presented in the *Golden Age* describing vaccinations as against God's everlasting covenant. (*Golden Age* 1921 Oct 12 p.17; 1931 Feb 4 p.293)

See [Medical Advice - Vaccinations](#)

1952 - After 30 years the Watchtower Society returned to its original position, once again allowing vaccinations. (*Watchtower* 1952 Dec 15 p.764)

Organ transplants

Organ transplants were originally described as "wonderful and useful." (*Awake!* 1949 Dec 22 p.20)

1967 - Transplants forbidden to Witnesses as cannibalism. This continued to be the case through the 1970's. (*Watchtower* 1967 Nov 15 pp.702-704)

1980 - The Society overturned the decision and transplants became acceptable once again. (*Watchtower* 1980 Mar 15 p.31)

Eating Blood

Initially C.T. Russell viewed the decree in Acts chapter 15 as a recommendation to avoid stumbling the Jews. During his presidency there is no strict prohibition against eating blood. (*Watchtower* 1892 Nov 15 pp.349-352, *Watchtower* 1909 Apr 15 pp.116-117)

Blood Serum

1954 - Unacceptable.

"We are told that it takes one and a third pints of whole blood to get enough of the blood protein or "fraction" known as gamma globulin for one injection... its being made of whole blood places it in the same category as blood transfusions as far as Jehovah's prohibition of taking blood into the system is concerned." *Awake!* 1954 Jan 8 p.24

1958 - Acceptable (*Watchtower* 1958 Sep 15 p.575)

1963 - Unacceptable (*Watchtower* 1963 Feb 15 p.124)

1965 - Acceptable (*Watchtower* 1964 Nov 15 pp.680-3)

1974 - Conscience matter (*Watchtower* 1974 Jun 1 p.352)

Hemodilution

1972 - Unacceptable.

"The Journal of the American Medical Association, dated Nov 15, 1971, described a procedure for open-heart surgery that employs "sever hemodilution." Early in the operation a large quantity of blood is drawn off into a plastic blood bag. Though the bag is left connected to the patient by a tube, the removed and stored blood is no longer circulating in the patient's system. It is replaced with a plasma volume expander, which dilutes the blood remaining in the veins and which gradually dissipates during the operative procedure. Near the conclusion of the operation the blood storage bag is elevated, and the stored blood is reinfused into the patient. The New York Times of Nov 9, 1971, reported on a somewhat similar procedure whereby some days before one undergoes surgery as much as four pints of blood are removed and stored. During the operation the person's own stored blood is transfused back into him, thus avoiding the danger of disease and mismatched blood. These techniques are noteworthy to Christians, since they run counter to God's Word. The Bible shows that blood is not to be taken out of a body, stored and then later reused." *Awake!* 1972 Apr 8 p.30

1982 - Objectionable.

"Techniques for intraoperative collection or hemodilution that involve blood storage are objectionable to them." *Awake!* 1982 Jun 22 p.25

1983 - Acceptable.

"It is with this in mind, and not just to honor the requests of Jehovah's Witnesses, that Denton Cooley [of Houston, Texas] has performed open-heart operations now for over seven years, limiting transfusions wherever possible by substituting hemodilution, diluting the patient's blood with a glucose and heparin solution." *Awake!* 1983 Mar 22 p.16

Blood transfusions

Originally Allowed. Blood transfusions and donating blood for transfusion is commended (*Golden Age* 1925 July 29 p.683, *Golden Age* 1929 May 1 p.502, [Consolation 1940 December 25 p.19](#))

1945 - Forbidden. Blood transfusions first stated as wrong (*Watchtower* 1945 July 1 p.198-201)

1961 - Became a disfellowshipping offence (*Watchtower* 1961 Jan 15 pp.63-64)

In 1961 it was clearly specified that blood law applies to both whole blood and components of blood such as blood fractions and haemoglobin.

"If you have reason to believe that a certain product contains blood or a blood fraction if the label says that certain tablets contain hemoglobin this is from blood...a Christian knows, without asking, that he should avoid such a preparation. *Watchtower* 1961 Nov 1 p.669

Gradually becoming allowed again

1982 - Blood components are listed with some minor components allowed. Major components and hemodilution are forbidden. (*Awake!* 1982 Jun 22 p.25)

1995 - Acute Normovolemic Hemodilution (ANH) and autologous blood salvage procedure (Cell Saver) are acceptable despite being briefly stored outside the blood. (*Watchtower* 1995 August 1 p.30)

2000 - Major change to blood policy, with all of blood now being allowed when converted to minor fractions.

"...when it comes to fractions of any of the primary components, each Christian, after careful and prayerful meditation, must conscientiously decide for himself." *Watchtower* 2000 Jun 15 pp.29-31

Haemoglobin is what makes blood blood, as it carries the oxygen. It is also a major component of blood by weight, accounting for 33% of red blood cells and 14% of whole blood. As such, to allow haemoglobin effectively makes the Watchtower's entire blood policy meaningless.

1992 - Specifically Forbidden

"It would be right, of course, to avoid products that listed things such as blood, blood plasma, plasma, globin [or globulin] protein, or hemoglobin [or globin] iron." *Watchtower* 1992 Oct 15 p.31

2000- Indirectly Allowed. With the *Watchtower* 2000 Jun 15 stating that fractions of the four blood components are allowed, haemoglobin was indirectly permitted, being a fraction of red blood cells. The same conclusion could also be drawn from the 2004 chart.

2006- Specifically Allowed. In the *Kingdom Ministry* 2006 Nov p.5, a work sheet specifically stated that haemoglobin is a personal decision.