

# WithHolding or continuing Enteral feeds Around blood Transfusion (WHEAT) to prevent necrotising enterocolitis (NEC) in preterm infants

ACTRN12619000711112

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**Status** RECRUITING  
**Sponsor** Australian and New Zealand Neonatal Network  
**Enrollment** 4,437 participants

## Plain Language Summary

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Necrotising enterocolitis (NEC) is a devastating and potentially fatal intestinal disease that primarily affects very premature babies. It causes the tissue in the bowel to become inflamed and, in serious cases, to die. Doctors have noticed that NEC sometimes develops shortly after a premature baby receives a blood transfusion, but it is not clear whether this is linked to feeding at the time of the transfusion.

The WHEAT trial is investigating whether pausing feeds around the time of a blood transfusion reduces the risk of NEC compared to continuing feeds as normal. Babies born before 30 weeks gestation who need a blood transfusion will be enrolled in this multicentre trial across Australia and New Zealand. Their parents (or guardians) can choose to opt out if they prefer not to participate.

This study is relevant to families of extremely premature babies admitted to a neonatal intensive care unit who are approaching their first blood transfusion. Babies with major bowel abnormalities or a previous episode of NEC are not eligible. Finding a safe answer to this question could have a meaningful impact on the health of thousands of premature babies born every year.

## Key Eligibility Criteria

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### Inclusion (2)

- Preterm birth at less than 30 weeks gestation
- Parents do not opt out of trial participation

### Exclusion (4)

- Infants with major congenital malformation of the gastrointestinal tract
- Parents have chosen to opt out from participation
- Given packed red cell transfusion with concurrent enteral feeds before enrolment (infants who have received a packed red cell transfusion while nil by mouth ARE still eligible)
- Previous episode of NEC

## Locations (6 total)

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Royal Hospital for Women - Randwick, NSW,VIC, Australia  
John Hunter Children's Hospital - New Lambton, NSW,VIC, Australia  
Royal Prince Alfred Hospital - Camperdown, NSW,VIC, Australia  
... and 3 more locations

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<https://www.anzctr.org.au/Trial/Registration/TrialReview.aspx?ACTRN=ACTRN12619000711112>

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