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# Ministry suspends two

## Action taken against medical personnel over wrong blood transfusions

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Two medical personnel have been suspended following two cases of blood transfusions in which patients were given the wrong blood type.

Health Minister Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai said the ministry had strict protocol in place for blood transfusions and these sort of incidents "should not be happening".

"The two individuals were immediately suspended as they did not follow procedures," he said after launching a blood donation campaign at Kolej Tunku Abdul Rahman yesterday.

Liow said the two cases which occurred in Penang and Kajang recently were not the fault of the National Blood Centre (NBC).

He assured the public that blood from the NBC system was "completely safe" for use as the ministry would not allow anything to threaten the safety and quality of blood from donors.

In the case of a HIV-positive housewife in Ipoh, Liow said the ministry would closely examine all activities and medical procedures she had undergone to find out how she contracted the virus.

The 56-year-old kidney patient, Yun Ah Thai, was suspected to have contracted HIV via blood transfusion but all eight donors have been confirmed to be free of the virus.

She had received 18 pints of blood from the donors through several blood transfusions since January and tested positive for HIV at Universiti Malaya Medical Centre on Aug 15 where she was supposed to undergo minor surgery.

The investigation by the state Health Department is expected to take two weeks.

Liow said plans were also underway to build a plasma fractionation plant here next year as an initiative by the private sector and supported by the ministry.

Currently, he said blood was sent to Australia to be fractionated (broken into component parts such as plasma and platelets).

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**Do your bit:** Yip Yi Yun (left) and Wong Shoo Yen donating blood during the campaign at Tunku Abdul Rahman College in Setapak.