What is CMV?
CMV (Cytomegalovirus) CMV is a complex flu-like virus that most adults are exposed to at sometime in their lives. It is a double stranded DNA virus belonging to the herpes virus family. The virus is harmless to adults.

Who gets CMV?
Almost everyone is susceptible to the virus, although males ages 18-26 seem to be the least likely to get it. As with other viruses, once you've had them, your body retains the antibodies. Many adults are exposed to CMV and don't know it.

Why is CMV Negative Blood Preferred for Pediatric Transfusions?
CMV can persist in infected donor white cells and is often transmitted by a blood transfusion, but rarely causes disease. However, in the case of low birth weight infants the consequences of such infection may be severe or even fatal. Because the immune systems in these infants are not fully developed, every precaution must be taken to avoid infection. Scientific studies have shown blood lacking this virus (CMV negative blood) is safer for pediatric patients.

How is Donor Blood Tested for CMV?
Donor blood is tested for the presence of CMV antibodies. If no antibodies are present, the donor is deemed CMV negative, and can be a “baby donor”. Donors who have tested negative in the past are re-tested prior to the release of their blood because there is a chance the donor may have been exposed to CMV infection since the last donation.