

BLOOD DONATION AWARENESS

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WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO DONATE BLOOD?

According to the American Red Cross, out of the 335 million people in the United States, about 6.8 million donate blood each year. This is about 13.6 million units donated yearly. However, blood is needed about every 2 seconds of every day, according to OneBlood. This is because there is no way to make blood outside of the human body and it can only be stored for a limited time. Unfortunately, of the 62% of people who can donate blood, only about 3% do. This is not enough to meet the amount of blood and blood products needed.



HOW IS THE DONATED BLOOD USED?

Donations are used to help people in need of blood due to medical conditions, traumatic injuries, surgery or cancer treatments. Each donation can be used to save 3 lives. When you donate blood, it can be used whole or separated into multiple products. When separated, whole blood becomes:

- Red cells - carry oxygen to the cells of the body and remove carbon dioxide from the cells.
- White cells - fight infection.
- Platelets - clot the blood when there is an injury that causes bleeding, such as a cut, bruise, etc.
- Plasma - is the fluid part of the blood that carries all the other parts around the body.

WHAT IS THE PROCESS FOR DONATING?

- Upon arrival at the donation site, you will fill out a donor registration form and will be required to show your donor card, driver's license, or 2 other forms of ID.
- Next, you will have a quick health assessment which includes answering health questions, having your vital signs taken (temperature, blood pressure, and pulse,) and hemoglobin check.
- Now it's time to donate. You will be placed in a comfortable reclining chair and a needle will be placed in your arm.
- Finally, it's time for snacks. Your body may need some replacement fluids and calories after the donation to keep you from feeling lightheaded. The staff will likely ask that you wait 10-15 minutes to be sure you are feeling okay before you leave the facility.

WHO CAN DONATE BLOOD?

Donation eligibility depends on the type of donation a donor plans to make. There are multiple types of donations, but the most common are:

Whole blood

- For most states, the minimum age is 16
- Must weigh 110 pounds or more
- Be in good health and not actively sick
- May donate up to 6 times a year - 56 days apart

Platelets

- For most states, the minimum age is 17
- Must weigh 110 pounds or more
- Be in good health and not actively sick
- May donate up to 24 times a year - 7 days apart

Plasma

- Minimum age is 18
- Must weigh 110 pounds or more
- Not have a spreadable virus and be in good health
- May donate 2 times within a 7-day period

HOW LONG DOES A DONATION TAKE?

From start to finish, donating whole blood takes about an hour. If you are donating platelets, red cells or plasma, it can take up to 2 hours.

WHERE CAN I DONATE?

Most cities have multiple places to donate. If you don't know where to look in your area, search for blood donation sites near you or a Red Cross office. Some companies will choose to do blood drives at work. Even some high schools hold blood drives for their students who are eligible to give.

SOURCES:

- <https://www.redcrossblood.org/donate-blood/how-to-donate/eligibility-requirements.html>
- <https://www.redcrossblood.org/local-homepage/news/article/blood-donation-importance.html>
- <https://www.oneblood.org/about-donating/blood-donor-basics/what-is-blood/why-blood-is-needed.stml>
- <https://www.redcrossblood.org/faq.html#:~:text=How%20long%20does%20a%20blood,takes%20eight%20to%2010%20minutes>
- <https://www.donatingplasma.org/donation/donor-faq#:~:text=Generally%2C%20plasma%20donors%20must%20be,to%20manufacture%20plasma%20protein%20therapies>