

FACTS

ABOUT BLOOD DONATION



WHAT MEDICINES WOULD PREVENT SOMEONE FROM DONATING?

In most cases, it is the condition for which the person is taking the medicine(s) that causes him or her to be unable to give blood, not the medication(s). Usually, if the condition is under control the day of the donation, the person is eligible to donate. This includes medicine(s) for high blood pressure and diabetes.

WHY NOT WAIT UNTIL SOMEONE I KNOW NEEDS MY BLOOD?

A single trauma patient may use many pints of blood. It takes 48 hours to test and process blood. In emergency situations, it's the blood already donated that saves lives.

IS THERE ANYTHING SPECIAL I NEED TO DO BEFORE MY DONATION?

Be sure to eat at your regular mealtimes and drink plenty of fluids. Eat foods rich in iron, since only blood with good iron levels will be accepted for donation.

HOW WILL I FEEL AFTER THE DONATION?

Most people feel absolutely fine, or even great, knowing that they may have helped save a life. This is especially the case when they've eaten regular meals before the donation. Please refrain from exercising the day of your donation.

WHAT AGE DO I HAVE TO BE TO DONATE BLOOD?

Individuals who are 17 years of age (16 with parental permission in some states), weigh at least 110 pounds and are in generally good health may be eligible to donate. High school students and anyone age 18 or younger must meet additional height and weight requirements. There is no upper age limit.

HOW OFTEN CAN I DONATE?

According to FDA regulations, you can donate whole blood every 56 days, platelets up to 24 times a year and double red cells every 112 days.

WHAT HAPPENS TO MY BLOOD AFTER DONATING?

After donation, your blood undergoes several tests including blood type, hepatitis and HIV. Then it will be available for hospital patients. Your single donation may help save up to three lives.

WHAT IF I DON'T FEEL WELL THE DAY OF THE BLOOD DRIVE?

For your protection and to protect the hospital patient receiving your blood, you must be well the day of your donation. If you don't feel well, please rest, recover and return to your next blood drive to make your lifesaving donation.

EASY AS 1.2.3

1. SHOW A PHOTO ID, READ MATERIALS AND ANSWER A LIST OF HEALTH HISTORY QUESTIONS.

2. You will receive a mini health exam including checks for: temperature, pulse, hemoglobin (iron content), and blood pressure. Your answers to the health history questions will then be reviewed by a staff member, and upon meeting all the criteria, you may proceed with the blood donation process.
3. A Red Cross staff member will cleanse your arm and prepare you for the donation process. Most donations take about 10 minutes. After your donation, you will be offered refreshments to help your body begin replacing the blood you donated.

BLOOD FACTS

CONTINUED...

- On any given day, an average of 38,000 units of red blood cells are needed for hospital patients in the United States.
- One in 10 people entering a hospital needs blood.
- Approximately 38 percent of the population is eligible to donate blood. Of those eligible, only a small fraction have actually given blood.
- In the United States, someone needs a blood transfusion about every two seconds.
- The average adult body contains 10-12 pints of blood. A newborn baby has about one cup of blood in his or her body.
- There are about one billion red blood cells in two to three drops of blood.
- Red blood cells must be transfused within 42 days.
- There is no substitute for human blood. It cannot be manufactured.
- Almost everyone will know someone who needs blood.
- Blood is often needed for traumas, heart surgeries, joint replacements, organ transplants, premature babies, leukemia and cancer treatments, and much more.
- People in car accidents who suffer massive blood loss may require transfusions of more than 50 pints of red blood cells.

NUTRITION

AND IRON IN YOUR BLOOD

Good nutrition is important in everyone's life - especially for a blood donor - and iron is a major ingredient to good nutrition. At the blood collection site, your blood will be checked to determine if your red cells are adequate for donation. Red Cross iron level requirements are followed to make sure you can spare a pint of blood. The requirements also mean each patient receives an iron-rich transfusion.

Iron is one of the body's most important elements. It is needed in small but vital amounts. Iron combines with protein to make hemoglobin, the red substance in the blood that carries oxygen from the lungs to body cells and removes carbon dioxide from those cells.

Your iron level changes constantly depending on your food intake and your physical activity level. Not passing this test does not mean you are unhealthy. Modifying your eating habits to include iron-rich foods should enable you to donate soon.

- **IRON-RICH FOODS:** Red meat, oysters, clams, soybeans, dried beans, peas and lentils, whole grain cereals and breads, as well as prunes and dried fruits are excellent sources of iron.
- **COMBINE FOODS RICH IN VITAMIN C WITH FOODS RICH IN IRON:** Vitamin C helps the body absorb iron. It can be found in citrus fruits/juices, kiwi, cantaloupe, strawberries, broccoli, tomatoes, peppers, potatoes, cabbage, spinach and leafy greens such as turnip, beet and collard greens.
- **DRINK WATER - AVOID COFFEE AND TEA:** Tannins in coffee and tea can block the absorption of iron. Drinking lots of water has countless benefits.

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**IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT DONATING BLOOD OR DONOR ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS,
PLEASE CALL 1-800-GIVE-LIFE OR VISIT REDCROSSBLOOD.ORG.**