

Experience the wonder of saving lives



Blood donors have an amazing impact on the world, and there's no better feeling than knowing you are saving lives!

As a first-time donor, you probably have a lot of questions. Here are important facts about blood donation and answers to common questions.

Why **BLOOD DONATION** is important

**SOMEONE
NEEDS
BLOOD
EVERY**



2 SECONDS

About 42,000 units total of blood, platelets & plasma are used by patients in U.S. hospitals EVERY DAY.

Your donation can save up to three people



Blood is made up of three parts - red blood cells, platelets and plasma and can potentially help three different patients.

BLOOD CAN ONLY COME FROM VOLUNTEER DONORS.

Despite all our advances in science, blood cannot be made in a lab. It must come from people like you.

**A TRAUMA
PATIENT CAN
REQUIRE
UP TO**



**THE
MAJORITY
OF BLOOD
RECIPIENTS
ARE**

- 1 People with chronic diseases
- 2 Cancer patients
- 3 Those with blood disorders

Blood transfusions also are needed for childbirth complications, newborn babies, and surgeries.



"We feel blessed there are selfless individuals out there who saved Maddalena's life by donating blood. Donating blood is really a simple act of kindness with an enormous impact."

Nancy T., whose daughter needed 40 blood products at birth.

The blood supply must constantly be replenished.

Because blood products are used quickly, and last a limited time, blood donations are always needed. Blood shortages frequently occur during major holidays and the summer, when fewer people are able to donate.

FAQs about blood donation

How do I know if I can donate blood? Donors must be at least 16 years old, weigh 110 pounds or more, and be in general good health to start.

Can I donate if I have tattoos? Tattoos are okay if they were performed in a state-regulated shop, using sterile needles and single-use ink. The following states and Washington, D.C. do not regulate tattoo parlors, so you must wait 3 months to donate after getting a tattoo there: Connecticut, Georgia, Idaho, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Pennsylvania, Utah and Wyoming.

Can I donate if I take prescription medications? Most medications are acceptable.

Are there travel restrictions? Most travel is acceptable, including within the United States and Europe. Travel to certain areas with malaria risk will defer you from donating for 3 months. If you've traveled outside the United States in the last 3 months and want to confirm your eligibility, please call 800-289-4923.

Medication lists, travel information and additional eligibility criteria can be found on our website (vitalant.org/eligibility) or call our Medical Help Desk at 877-258-4825, option 1, for conditions or medications not listed.

How long does it take to donate? The typical donation, giving a pint of whole blood, takes about an hour. This includes checking in, filling out your health history questionnaire, the actual donation and resting for 15 minutes afterwards while you enjoy a free snack and drink.

You can also donate a specific part of your blood - platelets, plasma or Power Red (two units of red blood cells). These donations are done on special machines and take 1.5 to 2.5 hours. More information on different types of donation can be found on our website (vitalant.org/types-of-donation).

Will I feel okay after I donate? Preparing for your donation by eating a healthy meal within two hours before your donation - and drinking plenty of non-alcoholic fluids like water or sports drinks starting the day before - is the best preparation for a positive donation experience. It's also important to sit in our canteen area after you donate and replenish fluids and have a snack. Our staff is well-trained to assist you if you should feel lightheaded.

How often can I donate? You can donate whole blood every 56 days. Platelet donations can be made every 7 days up to 24 times a year; plasma, every 28 days; and Power Red, every 112 days.

Do I need to know my blood type? You do not need to know your blood type to donate. We test your blood after you donate and will let you know your blood type.

What else do I need to donate? Please bring a photo ID such as driver's license or military ID, or a document with your name and date of birth. After you donate, you will receive a Donor ID card and unique ID number you can use for future donations.

Be prepared to answer detailed questions about your health history; the FDA requires that all donors fill out a health history on the day of donation.

Ready to donate?
Schedule an appointment

We recommend making an appointment (walk-ins are also welcome). To find a location near you, visit vitalant.org and:

- Enter your zip code or allow location services, if prompted.
- Click on the Donate Now button to find a location near you.
- Follow the prompts to schedule your appointment.
- You can also call 877.25.VITAL (84825) for assistance.

We look forward to your visit!