

Facts About Blood Donation

- Every three seconds someone needs blood
- 4.5 million Americans would die each year without life saving blood transfusions.
- One unit of blood is roughly the equivalent of one pint.
- The average adult has 10 pints of blood in his or her body.
- A newborn baby has about one cup of blood in his or her body.
- There are four main blood types: A, B, AB and O. AB is the universal recipient and O negative is the universal donor.
- One unit of blood can be separated into several components (red blood cells, white blood cells, plasma, platelets and cryoprecipitate).
- Blood donation takes four steps: medical history, quick physical, donation, and snacks.
- The actual blood donation usually takes less than 10 minutes. The entire process, from when you sign in to the time you leave, takes about 45 minutes.
- Giving blood will not decrease your strength.
- You cannot get AIDS or any other infectious disease by donating blood.
- Fourteen tests, 11 of which are for infectious diseases, are performed on each unit of blood.
- Red blood cells carry oxygen to the body's organs and tissue.
- Red blood cells live about 120 days in the circulatory system.
- Platelets help blood to clot and give those with leukemia and other cancers a chance to live.
- Apheresis (ay-fur-ee-sis) is a special kind of blood donation that allows a donor to give specific blood components, such as platelets.
- Donated red blood cells must be used within 42 days of collection.
- Donated platelets must be used within five days of collection.
- People who have been in car accidents and suffered massive blood loss can need transfusions of 50 pints or more of red blood cells.
- The average bone marrow transplant requires 120 units of platelets and 20 units of red blood cells. Patients undergoing bone marrow transplants need platelets donations from about 120 people and red blood cells from about 20 people.
- Severe burn victims can need 20 units of platelets during their treatment.
- Anemic patients need blood transfusions to increase their iron levels.
- Cancer, transplant and trauma patients and patients undergoing open-heart surgery require platelet transfusions to survive.
- Sickle cell disease affects more than 80,000 people in the US, 98% of whom are of African descent. Some patients with complications from severe sickle cell disease receive blood transfusions every month – up to 4 pints at a time.
- After donating blood, your body replaces lost red blood cells within 3 to 4 weeks. It takes eight weeks to restore the iron lost after donating.
- There is no substitute for human blood.