

What You Must Know Before Giving Blood

Thank you for coming in today!

This information sheet explains how **YOU** can help us make the donation process safe for yourself and patients who might receive your blood. **PLEASE READ THIS INFORMATION BEFORE YOU DONATE!** You will be asked to sign a statement that says you understand and have read this information today. **If you have any questions now or at any time during the screening process, please ask blood center staff.**

Accuracy and honesty are essential

Your **complete honesty** in answering all questions is very important for the safety of patients who receive your blood. We will ask you for identification each time you try to donate. Please register using the same identifying information each time you donate (name, date of birth, etc.). **All information you provide is confidential.** Although your interview will be private, it may require more than one American Red Cross employee to participate in or be present at your health history and blood donation.

What happens when you give blood

To determine if you are eligible to donate we will:

- Ask questions about your health, travel, and medicines
- Ask questions to see if you might be at risk for hepatitis, HIV, or AIDS
- Take your blood pressure, temperature, and pulse
- Take a small blood sample to make sure you are not anemic

If you are able to donate we will:

- Cleanse your arm with an antiseptic (**If you are allergic to Iodine, please tell us!**)
- Use a new, sterile, disposable needle to collect your blood

While you are donating: (the donation usually takes about 10 minutes)

- You may feel a brief “sting” from the needle at the beginning

After donating we will give you:

- A form with post-donation instructions
 - A number to call if you have any problems or decide after you leave that your blood may not be safe to give to another person
-

What may occur after donating

Although most people feel fine before and after donating blood, a small number of people may have a(n)

- Lightheaded or dizzy feeling
- Upset stomach
- Black and blue mark, redness, or pain where the needle was
- Fainting or loss of consciousness and injury from related falls
- Very rarely, nerve or artery damage

We will give you a number to call to report any problems or concerns you may have following your donation.

Why we ask questions about sexual contact

Sexual contact may cause contagious diseases like HIV to get into the bloodstream and be spread through transfusions to someone else.

Definition of “sexual contact”:

The words “have sexual contact with” and “sex” are used in some of the questions we will ask you and apply to any of the following activities, whether or not a condom or other protection was used:

- Vaginal sex (contact between penis and vagina)
 - Oral sex (mouth or tongue on someone’s vagina, penis, or anus)
 - Anal sex (contact between penis and anus)
-

Continued on back

What You Must Know Before Giving Blood, Continued

Persons who should not donate

You should not give blood if you

- Had hepatitis on or after the age of 11
 - Had malaria in the past 3 years
 - Met any of the conditions listed in the CJD Information Sheet
 - Were held in a correctional facility (including jail, lock up, prison, or juvenile detention center) for more than 72 straight hours in the last 12 months
 - Have had sexual contact in the past 12 months with anyone who is sick with hepatitis or AIDS
 - Had or were treated for syphilis or gonorrhea or tested positive for syphilis in the last 12 months
 - Were raped in the last 12 months
 - **Have AIDS or have ever had a positive HIV test**
AIDS is caused by HIV. HIV is spread mainly through sexual contact with an infected person, or by sharing needles or syringes used for injecting drugs.
 - **Have done something that puts you at risk for becoming infected with HIV**
You are at risk for getting infected if you
 - Have ever used needles to take drugs, steroids, or anything not prescribed by your doctor
 - Are a male who has had sexual contact with another male, even once, since 1977
 - Have ever taken money, drugs, or other payment for sex since 1977
 - Have had sexual contact in the past 12 months with anyone described above
 - Received clotting factor concentrates for a bleeding disorder such as hemophilia
 - Were born in, or lived in, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Niger, or Nigeria, since 1977
 - Since 1977, received a blood transfusion or medical treatment with a blood product in any of these countries
 - Had sex with anyone who, since 1977, was born in or lived in any of these countries
 - **Have any of the following conditions that can be signs or symptoms of HIV/AIDS**
 - Unexplained weight loss (10 pounds or more in less than 2 months)
 - Night sweats
 - Blue or purple spots in your mouth or skin
 - White spots or unusual sores in your mouth
 - Lumps in your neck, armpits, or groin, lasting longer than one month
 - Diarrhea that won't go away
 - Cough that won't go away and shortness of breath
 - Fever higher than 100.5° F lasting more than 10 days
-

Ineligible donors

We maintain a confidential list of people who may be at risk for spreading transfusion-transmitted diseases. By continuing this process, you consent to be entered in this confidential list of deferred donors if you are at risk for spreading such diseases. When required, we report donor information, including test results, to health departments, military medical commands, and regulatory agencies. Donation information may also be used confidentially for medical studies.

If you decide not to give blood

If you decide that you should not give blood, you may leave now.

Testing your blood

Your blood will be tested for hepatitis, HIV (the virus that causes AIDS), syphilis, and other factors. (There are unusual circumstances in which these tests cannot be performed.) You will be notified about test results that may disqualify you from donating blood in the future or that may show you are unhealthy. Your blood will not be used if it could make someone sick. (A sample of your blood or a portion of your donation might be used now or in the future for additional tests or other medical studies. Please tell us if you object.)

Though the tests we use are very good, they are not perfect. HIV antibodies may take weeks to develop after infection with the virus. If you were infected recently, you might have a negative test result, yet be able to infect someone. That is why you must not give blood if you are at risk of getting AIDS or other infectious diseases. **If you think you may be at risk for HIV/AIDS or want an HIV/AIDS test, please ask for information about other testing facilities. Please do not donate to get tested for HIV, hepatitis, or any other infections!**

Travel to or birth in other countries

Blood donor tests may not be available for some contagious diseases that are found only in certain countries. If you were born in, have lived in, or visited certain countries, you may not be eligible to donate.
