



Blood Facts:

- Every 3 seconds someone needs blood.
- Only about 5% of the eligible population donates blood.
- Blood makes up about eight percent of a person's body weight.
- Donating one unit of blood can help save the lives of at least three people.
- The average adult has a little more than a pint of blood to every 25 pounds.
- Type O negative is the universal donor and can give blood to any other blood type.

How long does it take to give blood?

The process for whole blood donation usually takes about one hour. The blood collection itself is usually about 10 minutes. The donation process includes registration, a brief medical screening, blood collection and refreshments. Expect to spend about two hours for apheresis (platelet) collections.

How much blood is taken?

Whole blood and apheresis (platelet) donations are about 1 pint. One pint is roughly equal to 1 pound.

How often can I give?

Donate whole blood every 56 days. Red blood cells are the oxygen carrying cells. They can take two weeks or longer to fully return to normal.

What are platelets?

Platelets are tiny cell fragments that circulate throughout the blood and aid in blood clotting. Platelets are also known as thrombocytes.

Donate platelets (apheresis donation) as much as twice in one week -- or up to 24 times per year. Platelet and plasma components are replaced in the body more quickly than red cells. Platelets will return to normal levels within a few hours of donating. Plasma, the watery substance of your blood, takes a couple of days.

How much blood do I have in my body?

Women have about 10 pints, and men about 12 pints of blood in their bodies.

Are there age limits for blood donors?

17 years old is the minimum age to be a blood donor in most states; some states do allow 16-year-olds to donate.

Is it safe to give blood?

Yes. Donating blood is 100 percent safe. You cannot get HIV or any other infectious diseases from donating blood.

Is it safe to receive blood?

Yes. The blood supply is the safest it's ever been, especially since the implementation of nucleic acid-amplification testing (NAT) under an FDA-sponsored research protocol. NAT is a more sensitive gene-based test to screen the blood supply for HIV and hepatitis C. Fourteen tests are performed on every unit of donated blood. Eleven of these are for infectious diseases. General safety procedures are also in place: blood donor eligibility standards, individual screening, laboratory testing, confidential exclusion of donations and donor record checks.

What is the universal blood type?

Type O negative is the universal donor and can give blood to any other blood type. **ONLY** 8% of the U.S. population has blood type O negative.

AB positive is the universal recipient and can receive blood from any other blood type. 2 ½ % of the U.S. population has blood type AB positive.

How long until my blood is used?

All blood donations are processed and available for use between 24 and 48 hours. Whole blood is processed into components (red cells, platelets, plasma). After processing, the red cells can be stored for 42 days. Plasma can be frozen and stored for up to 12 months. Platelets (from whole blood or by apheresis) expire after five days.

Are the health history questions necessary every time?

Yes. Screening questions must be asked of all donors at each donation. This is an FDA requirement that helps blood centers ensure the safest possible blood supply.

Do ABC members pay donors for giving blood?

America's Blood Centers members are volunteer donor supported organizations. They do not pay for blood donations. FDA rules say that blood used for transfusions cannot be "bought." Studies show that volunteer donors provide a safer blood supply.

Why do blood shortages occur?

A three-day supply is the optimum blood inventory level. The inventory changes hourly due to unpredictable demands from trauma incidents. When the supply drops below a three-day level, blood centers begin alerting local donors to increase the inventory to a safe operating level.

