

DONATING BLOOD OFFERS
SOME SURPRISING HEALTH
BENEFITS TO DONORS

JANUARY 2024

DONATING BLOOD IS GOOD FOR YOUR HEALTH

DONATING BLOOD CAN SEEM INTIMIDATING, BUT IT IS AN EASY PROCESS THAT CAN HELP SAVE SOMEONES LIFE. THERE IS NO END TO THE BENEFITS FOR THOSE WHO NEED IT. ACCORDING TO THE AMERICAN RED CROSS, ONE DONATION CAN SAVE AS MANY AS THREE LIVES, AND SOMEONE IN THE UNITED STATES NEEDS BLOOD EVERY TWO SECONDS.



BENEFITS

1 LOWERS RISK OF HEART DISEASE

Excessive oxidized iron in the body can also be harmful to cardiovascular health. In 1998, the American Journal of Epidemiology published research that suggests blood donation is linked



with lower risks of strokes and heart attacks, it has so much so that routine blood donors are 88% less likely than non-donors to have a heart attack, this is according to the evidence in the study that was published. This is also backed up by similar studies in the *Journal of Transfusion* and in the



American Medical Association and both show there is strong evidence that blood donation lowers iron stored in the blood and liver and reduces blood viscosity, which places less stress on the arteries and the blood vessels and slows down the blood clotting that can cause heart attack and stroke.

WHY CHOOSE US?

A MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY COMPANY COMMITTED TO LEADING PATIENT CARE IN HOSPITALS, OFFICES, AND HOME-BASED MEDICAL SERVICES BY DELIVERING HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS WITH SOLUTIONS.

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2 CREATES HELPER'S HIGH

Selfless service to others can create "helper's high," a feeling of elation, exhilaration, and increased energy, followed by a time of calm and serenity. It's a mental health benefit that many blood donors experience from knowing they're helping to save lives. This can, in turn, contribute to better physical health and longevity.

3 LOWERS RISK OF CANCER

Studies in the *American Journal of Epidemiology* and the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute* suggest that regular blood donation may lower the risk of cancer by releasing oxidized iron from the bloodstream. Oxidized iron, which produces harmful free radicals, can build up in the bloodstream and cause cancers, particularly those of the liver, lung, colon, and esophagus.

4 MAY SLOW DOWN THE AGING PROCESS

I'm not going to suggest that blood donation is the fountain of youth, but the fact that it does reduce free radicals in the bloodstream can possibly play a role in delaying the aging process. A study in the *Journal of Basic Clinical Physiology and Pharmacology* found that donating blood decreases oxidative stress, which can lead to cell and tissue damage and, in turn, aging.



5 BURNS CALORIES

While blood donation should never be used as a weight loss strategy, it has been shown that blood donors can burn up to 650 calories during the donation process. This is due to your body using extra energy to replace the amount of donated blood and synthesize new proteins, red blood cells, and other blood components. Notably, this is moreover why donors have to meet minimum weight (110+ pounds) and age (16+) requirements to donate blood safely.

6 BOOSTS LIVER HEALTH

Regularly donating blood can improve liver health. It does by removing excess iron from the body. The liver's job is to remove toxins from the body, but it can't do this effectively when it has a buildup of oxidized iron. Excess iron can cause cellular damage, which results in liver cirrhosis and many other medical issues. Donating blood on a regular basis can remove excess iron from the body before it has a chance to deposit into the liver.

7 PROVIDES A FREE BLOOD TEST

Before you can donate, you have to undergo a mandatory health screening to ensure you're healthy enough to give blood. Your vitals, such as pulse and blood pressure levels, are checked as well as hemoglobin levels. Your blood will also be screened for several serious illnesses. In essence, this serves as a mini medical exam at no cost to you.

BLOOD DONATION TIPS

Ready to roll up your sleeves and help save lives while improving your own health? Here are some tips to help ensure a safe, successful blood donation.

Before your blood donation appointment:

- Get a good night's sleep
- Eat a meal with iron-rich foods, like iron-fortified cereal, meat or beans

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- Drink extra fluids but avoid caffeinated beverages since they can cause dehydration
- Choose clothing that can allow your sleeves to be raised above the elbow

After you donate blood:

- Stand up slowly and rest in the donation center's lounge for a few minutes
- Enjoy a drink and snack offered by the donation center to avoid weakness and dizziness
- Drink extra liquids but avoid alcohol over the next 24 hours
- Avoid heavy lifting or vigorous exercise for the rest of the day

Patients who need blood the most, such as people with cancer, heart surgery, and accident victims, benefit when you donate blood. One pint of donated blood can save up to three lives. Blood donations are always needed.

BLOOD DONATION

OVERVIEW

Why donate blood?

Blood is crucial for life. It contains components that transport oxygen throughout the body and also fight infection. There is no man-made substitute for blood. It is only made in the body. Many patients depend on life-saving transfusions for a number of medical conditions, such as surgery and cancer treatments.

A healthy body can regenerate, or make more, blood in about 4 to 6 weeks. Donating one pint is a small amount of the body's total blood supply. Typically, there are about 10 to 12 pints of blood in a person's body.

Who can donate blood?

You must be at least 17 years old in Florida (or at least 16 years old with parental/guardian consent in Ohio and some other states), weigh 110 pounds or more, and be in good health. If you have a cold or the **flu** on the day you are scheduled to give blood, you should cancel your appointment and reschedule once you are feeling better.

There are some health concerns that can temporarily prevent you from



giving blood, such as:

- Some medications
- Low levels of **hemoglobin** (that's protein in your body that carries oxygen to cells and carbon dioxide away). If your hemoglobin is low, you might have low levels of red blood cells (a condition called **anemia**)
- **High** or low blood pressure or heartbeat
- Recent travel to a country with malaria risks
- Recent blood transfusion
- Pregnancy
- New tattoos (only in some states). In Ohio and Florida, for example, you don't need to wait if the tattoo was applied at a state-regulated establishment.

Other health concerns will permanently prevent you from giving blood, such as:

- **HIV/AIDS**
- Certain types of **hepatitis**
- Foreign travel to certain places during certain time frames

PROCEDURE DETAILS

What happens during blood donation?

Donating blood is generally simple and quick. It takes a total of about one hour of your time. Although the actual donation time is about 10 minutes, there are some items that need to be taken care of before and after the donation process.

When you arrive to donate blood, you need to show an ID, such as a driver's license or passport. You then are asked several health questions, including what types of medication you are taking, both prescription and over-the-counter. The questions are personal. It is very important that you read all of the information carefully and answer all of the

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questions honestly. The answers are kept confidential.

A quick exam also takes place to ensure that you are healthy enough to give blood. A nurse or technician takes your temperature, blood pressure and pulse. The technician also takes a small sample of your blood with a finger stick to make sure your hemoglobin is not low.

During the actual blood donation, you are either lying down or sitting in a chair. First, the area inside of your elbow is cleaned with antiseptic. Next, the technician inserts a needle into a vein in your arm and draws a pint of blood out of your body. It is not usually painful, but you will feel a prick when the needle goes through your skin.

Afterwards, you are given a small snack and something to drink. You are asked to remain seated for about 15 minutes to make sure there are no side effects or problems. You can leave after you have rested and are sent home with instructions to take it easy, drink plenty of water, and to avoid strenuous exercise for the next day or so.

What does blood donation feel like?

Most people describe only feeling the needle pricking the skin as it enters, without other discomfort. Very few donors have other issues during or after donating.

After giving blood, some people may feel a little dizzy or weak. That is why it is important that you rest for several minutes before leaving. It is also best to eat a snack and have a drink of water or juice right after you donate blood.

What happens to the donated blood?

The donation is tested for the blood type and for certain **infectious diseases**, but you should never donate blood for the purpose of getting tested for infectious diseases, you should see your doctor for that instead. Each pint of donated blood goes through some laboratory tests for infectious diseases before it can be used for patient care. If it does not pass any of these tests, the blood cannot be used and is safely thrown away. The donor will be notified when this happens.

The blood then goes to the lab where it is tested for blood type and the platelets, plasma and red blood cells are separated. The blood is usually available for patient use about 1 to 2 days after collection.

Who uses donated blood?

Volunteer blood donations will go to patients who need blood the most.



Typical recipients are those patients going through:

- Cancer treatment
- Heart or orthopedic surgery
- Organ transplant surgery
- Surgery after accidents

You can also donate blood for use by a family member or friend who has the same blood type as you. This is called a directed donation.

Sometimes, a healthy person can donate blood before to a non-emergency surgery. This blood is stored and available for surgery only for the person who donated it. This is especially helpful for patients who are difficult to find blood for because of antibodies. This is called an autologous donation.

RISKS/BENEFITS

What are the advantages of blood donation?

Donating blood can save someone's life. In fact, one pint of your blood can save up to three lives. There is always a need for blood. It is used every hour of every day at hospitals during surgeries and treatment of injuries and chronic illnesses in patients of all ages.

What are the side effects and risks of blood donation?

Most donors do not experience discomfort after donating. You may feel lightheaded, tired, or dizzy after giving blood, so you should not plan to do anything strenuous after donating. The place where you donate blood will give you information afterwards on how you are to care for your bandage and other instructions.

Sterile materials are used and discarded safely after one-time use on the donor. This is for the safety of the person who receives the blood, as well as the safety of the donor, and the staff collecting the blood.

RECOVERY AND OUTLOOK

What happens after a blood donation?

After donating blood, you'll be able to return to your regular routine soon. It is best to follow the donation center's instructions after your donation. It is also important to immediately let the donation center know if you think of health information that you did not inform them of previously, or if you develop other issues such as **fever**, muscle aches and others, according to their instruction sheet. If you are a regular donor, talk with your doctor about adding multivitamins to your diet to make sure that you are not depleting your iron and other vitamins when giving blood.

How often can I donate blood?

Because a healthy body continues to make blood, new red blood cells will replace those that were donated in approximately four to six weeks. It is safe to donate whole blood every 56 days, but may be sooner or longer depending on the type of blood component that is donated.

