

Save a Life: Donate Blood!

One of the noblest efforts you can undertake is to help save a life. Did you know you can help save the lives of up to three people with a single blood donation? According to the American Red Cross, someone in the US needs blood every two seconds. More than 41,000 blood donations are needed each day.

January is National Blood Donor Month for good reason. Winter weather and increased cold and flu symptoms can keep dedicated donors from giving. So raising awareness during winter is especially important.

Why Donate?

Donated blood must be used quickly after collection so the need for new donations remains constant. Reasons for blood transfusions include blood disorders, diseases like cancers, illnesses, infections, injuries, organ failure, surgeries and others. Few things are more gratifying than helping others and saving lives, and blood is something many people can spare.

Who Can Donate?

Recent estimates indicate that nearly 38% of the US population is eligible to donate blood, yet only about 10% do. The American Red Cross lists three main requirements to be a good blood donor candidate - be in good general health, at least 17 years old and weigh at least 110 pounds.

What's the Donation Process?

Before your donation, a health professional will provide you information, ask you questions and check your vital statistics to ensure that you can safely donate blood. The donation process is a safe process including registration, medical questionnaire and vitals, donation and refreshments. The total process takes approximately an hour. The donation of a pint of whole blood takes eight to 10 minutes. The plasma from your donation is replaced within about 24 hours. Red cells need from four to six weeks for complete replacement. That's why at least eight weeks are required between whole blood donations.

Visit <http://www.redcrossblood.org/donating-blood/donation-process> for more information on where and how to donate blood.

Is Donating Safe?

Donating blood is safe and easy. It's not possible to get infectious diseases from donating. Each donor's blood is collected through a new, sterile needle that's used once, then discarded. Most donors feel fine before and after donating. Blood donations are thoroughly tested to ensure safe distribution to patients in need.

Learn More

In addition to donating blood, you can also help by making a financial donation to support the Red Cross. Monetary donations enable the Red Cross to ensure an ongoing blood supply, provide support to families in need and prepare communities by teaching lifesaving skills.

Remember, the life you save may be your loved one's or even your own. Visit the American Red Cross website at www.redcross.org or call 1-800-733-2767 for more information.