

Eligibility to Donate Blood

Medications and Vaccinations

Aspirin

Aspirin, no waiting period for donating whole blood. However, you must wait 2 days (3 days if you donate in New York State) after taking aspirin or any medication containing aspirin before donating platelets by apheresis.

Antibiotics

A donor with an acute infection should not donate. The reason for antibiotic use must be evaluated to determine if the donor has a bacterial infection that could be transmissible by blood.

Acceptable after finishing oral antibiotics for an infection (bacterial or viral). May have taken last pill on the date of donation. Antibiotic by injection for an infection acceptable 10 days after last injection. Acceptable if you are taking antibiotics to prevent an infection for the following reasons: acne, chronic prostatitis, peptic ulcer disease, periodontal disease, pre-dental work, rosacea, ulcerative colitis, after a splenectomy, or valvular heart disease. If you have a temperature above 99.5 F, you may not donate.

Birth Control

Women on oral contraceptives or using other forms of birth control are eligible to donate.

Immunization, Vaccination

- Acceptable if you were vaccinated for influenza, tetanus or meningitis, providing you are symptom-free and fever-free. Includes the Tdap vaccine.
- Acceptable if you received an HPV Vaccine (example, Gardasil).
- Wait 4 weeks after immunizations for German Measles (Rubella), MMR (Measles, Mumps and Rubella), Chicken Pox and Shingles.
- Wait 2 weeks after immunizations for Red Measles (Rubeola), Mumps, Polio (by mouth), and Yellow Fever vaccine.
- Wait 21 days after immunization for hepatitis B as long as you are not given the immunization for exposure to hepatitis B.
- **Smallpox vaccination and did not develop complications**
Wait 8 weeks (56 days) from the date of having a smallpox vaccination as long as you have had no complications. Complications may include skin reactions beyond the vaccination site or general illness related to the vaccination.
- **Smallpox vaccination and developed complications**
Wait 14 days after all vaccine complications have resolved or 8 weeks (56 days) from the date of having had the smallpox vaccination whichever is the longer period of time. You should discuss your particular situation with the health historian at the time of donation. Complications may include skin reactions beyond the vaccination site or general illness related to the vaccination.

- **Smallpox vaccination – close contact with someone who has had the smallpox vaccine in the last eight weeks and you did not develop any skin lesions or other symptoms.**
Eligible to donate.
- **Smallpox vaccination – close contact with someone who has had the vaccine in the last eight weeks and you have since developed skin lesions or symptoms.**
Wait 8 weeks (56 days) from the date of the first skin lesion or sore. You should discuss your particular situation with the health historian at the time of donation. Complications may include skin reactions or general illness related to the exposure.

Insulin (Bovine)

Donors with diabetes who since 1980, ever used bovine (beef) insulin made from cattle from the United Kingdom are not eligible to donate. This requirement is related to concerns about variant CJD, or 'mad cow' disease. [Learn more about variant CJD and blood donation.](#)

Medications

In almost all cases, medications will not disqualify you as a blood donor. Your eligibility will be based on the reason that the medication was prescribed. As long as the condition is under control and you are healthy, blood donation is usually permitted.

Over-the-counter oral homeopathic medications, herbal remedies, and nutritional supplements are acceptable. There are a handful of drugs that are of special significance in blood donation. Persons on these drugs have waiting periods following their last dose before they can donate blood:

- Accutane, Amnesteem, Absorica, Claravis, Myorisan, Sotret or Zenatane (isotretinoin), Proscar (finasteride), and Propecia (finasteride) - wait 1 month from the last dose.
- Avodart or Jalyn (dutasteride) - wait 6 months from the last dose.
- Aspirin, no waiting period for donating whole blood. However you must wait 2 days (3 days if you donate in New York State) after taking aspirin or any medication containing aspirin before donating platelets by apheresis.
- Effient (prasugrel) and Brilinta (ticagrelor)- no waiting period for donating whole blood. However you must wait 7 days after taking this medication before donating platelets by apheresis.
- Feldene (piroxicam), no waiting period for donating whole blood. However you must wait 2 days after taking Feldene (piroxicam) before donating platelets by apheresis.
- Arixtra (fondaparinux), Coumadin, Warfilone, Jantoven (warfarin) and Heparin, are prescription blood thinners- you should not donate since your blood will not clot normally. If your doctor discontinues your treatment with blood thinners, wait 7 days before returning to donate.
- Fragmin (dalteparin), Eliquis (apixaban), Pradaxa (dabigatran), Savaysa (edoxaban), Xarelto (rivaroxaban), and Lovenox (enoxaparin) are also prescription blood thinners- you should not donate since your blood will not clot normally. If your doctor discontinues your treatment with these blood thinners, wait 2 days before returning to donate.

- Other prescription blood thinners not listed, call 866-236-3276 to speak with an eligibility specialist about your individual situation.
- Hepatitis B Immune Globulin – given for exposure to hepatitis, wait 12 months after exposure to hepatitis.
- Human pituitary-derived growth hormone at any time - you are not eligible to donate blood.
- Plavix (clopidogrel), Ticlid (ticlopidine) and Zontivity (vorapaxar) - no waiting period for donating whole blood. However you must wait 14 days after taking this medication before donating platelets by apheresis.
- Soriatane (acitretin) – wait 3 years.
- Tegison (etretinate) at any time – you are not eligible to donate blood.
- Erivedge (vismodegib) and Odomzo (sonidegib)– wait 2 years.
- Aubagio (teriflunomide) – wait 2 years.

General Health Considerations

Cold, Flu

- Wait if you have a fever or a productive cough (bringing up phlegm)
- Wait if you do not feel well on the day of donation.
- Wait until you have completed antibiotic treatment for sinus, throat or lung infection.

Weight and Height

You must weigh at least 110 lbs to be eligible for blood donation for your own safety. Students who donate at high school drives and donors 18 years of age or younger must also meet additional height and weight requirements for whole blood donation (applies to girls shorter than 5'6" and boys shorter than 5').

Blood volume is determined by body weight and height. Individuals with low blood volumes may not tolerate the removal of the required volume of blood given with whole blood donation. There is no upper weight limit as long as your weight is not higher than the weight limit of the donor bed/lounge you are using. You can discuss any upper weight limitations of beds and lounges with your local health historian.

Allergy, Stuffy Nose, Itchy Eyes, Dry Cough

Acceptable as long as you feel well, have no fever, and have no problems breathing through your mouth.

Donation Intervals

- Wait at least 8 weeks between whole blood (standard) donations.
- Wait at least 7 days between platelet (pheresis) donations.
- Wait at least 16 weeks between Power Red (automated) donations.

Medical Conditions that Affect Eligibility

Allergies

Acceptable as long as you feel well, have no fever, and have no problems breathing through your mouth.

Asthma

Acceptable as long as you do not have any limitations on daily activities and are not having difficulty breathing at the time of donation and you otherwise feel well. Medications for asthma do not disqualify you from donating.

Bleeding Condition

If you have a history of bleeding problems, you will be asked additional questions. If your blood does not clot normally, you should not donate since you may have excessive bleeding where the needle was placed. For the same reason, you should not donate if you are taking any "blood thinner" such as:

- Atrixa (fondaparinux)
- Coumadin (warfarin)
- Eliquis (apixaban)
- Fragmin (dalteparin)
- Heparin
- Jantoven (warfarin)
- Lovenox (enoxaparin)
- Pradaxa (dabigatran)
- Savaysa (edoxaban)
- Warfilone (warfarin)
- Xarelto (rivaroxaban)

If you are on aspirin, it is OK to donate whole blood. However, you must be off of aspirin for at least 2 days (3 days if you donate in New York state) in order to donate platelets by apheresis. Donors with clotting disorder from Factor V who are not on anticoagulants are eligible to donate; however, all others must be evaluated by the health historian at the collection center.

Blood Pressure (High or Low)

High Blood Pressure - Acceptable as long as your blood pressure is below 180 systolic (first number) and below 100 diastolic (second number) at the time of donation. Medications for high blood pressure do not disqualify you from donating.

Low Blood Pressure - Acceptable as long as you feel well when you come to donate, and your blood pressure is at least 90/50 (systolic/diastolic).

Cancer

Eligibility depends on the type of cancer and treatment history. If you had leukemia or lymphoma, including Hodgkin's Disease and other cancers of the blood, you are not eligible to donate. Other types of cancer are acceptable if the cancer has been treated successfully and it has been more than 12 months since treatment was completed and there has been no cancer recurrence in this time. Lower risk in-situ cancers including squamous or basal cell cancers of the skin that have been completely removed do not require a 12-month waiting period.

Precancerous conditions of the uterine cervix do not disqualify you from donation if the abnormality has been treated successfully. You should discuss your particular situation with the health historian at the time of donation.

Chronic Illnesses

Most chronic illnesses are acceptable as long as you feel well, the condition is under control, and you meet all other eligibility requirements.

CJD, vCJD, Mad Cow Disease

Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (CJD) If you ever received a dura mater (brain covering) transplant or human pituitary growth hormone, you are not eligible to donate. Those who have a blood relative who had Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease are also not eligible to donate.

Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease, Variant (vCJD); "Mad Cow Disease"

See [Eligibility Reference Material](#)

Diabetes

Diabetics who are well controlled on insulin or oral medications are eligible to donate.

Heart Disease

In general, acceptable as long as you have been medically evaluated and treated, have no current (within the last 6 months) heart related symptoms such as chest pain and have no limitations or restrictions on your normal daily activities.

Wait at least 6 months following an episode of angina.

Wait at least 6 months following a heart attack.

Wait at least 6 months after bypass surgery or angioplasty.

Wait at least 6 months after a change in your heart condition that resulted in a change to your medications

If you have a pacemaker, you may donate as long as your pulse is between 50 and 100 beats per minute and you meet the other heart disease criteria. You should discuss your particular situation with your personal healthcare provider and the health historian at the time of donation.

Heart Murmur, Heart Valve Disorder

Acceptable if you have a heart murmur as long as you have been medically evaluated and treated and have not had symptoms in the last 6 months and have no restrictions on your normal daily activities.

Hemochromatosis (Hereditary)

American Red Cross does not accept individuals with hemochromatosis as blood donors.

Hemoglobin, Hematocrit, Blood Count

In order to donate blood, a woman must have a hemoglobin level of at least 12.5 g/dL, and a man must have a hemoglobin level of at least 13.0 g/dL. For all donors, the hemoglobin level can be no greater than 20 g/dL.

Separate requirements for hemoglobin level apply for Power Red.

Hepatitis, Jaundice

If you have signs or symptoms of hepatitis (inflammation of the liver) caused by a virus, or unexplained jaundice (yellow discoloration of the skin), you are not eligible to donate blood. If you ever tested positive for hepatitis B or hepatitis C, at any age, you are not eligible to donate, even if you were never sick or jaundiced from the infection.

Hepatitis Exposure

If you live with or have had sexual contact with a person who has hepatitis, you must wait 12 months after the last contact.

Persons who have been detained or incarcerated in a facility (juvenile detention, lockup, jail, or prison) for more than 72 consecutive hours (3 days) are deferred for 12 months from the date of last occurrence. This includes work release programs and weekend incarceration. These persons are at higher risk for exposure to infectious diseases.

Wait 12 months after receiving a blood transfusion (unless it was your own "autologous" blood), non-sterile needle stick or exposure to someone else's blood.

HIV, AIDS

You should not give blood if you have AIDS or have ever had a positive HIV test, or if you 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 any drugs, steroids, or anything not prescribed by your doctor
- are a male who has had sexual contact with another male, in the last 12 months
- have ever taken money, drugs or other payment for sex
- have had sexual contact in the past 12 months with anyone described above

You should not give blood if you have any of the following conditions that can be signs or symptoms of HIV/AIDS:

- Fever
- Enlarged lymph glands
- Sore throat
- Rash

Hypertension, High Blood Pressure

See "Blood Pressure (High)"

Infections

If you have a fever or an active infection, wait until the infection has resolved completely before donating blood.

Wait until finished taking antibiotics for an infection (bacterial or viral). Wait 10 days after the last antibiotic injection for an infection.

Those who have had infections with Chagas Disease, Babesiosis or Leishmaniasis are not eligible to donate.

See - [Eligibility Criteria: Alphabetical](#)

Malaria

Malaria is transmitted by the bite of mosquitoes found in certain countries and may be transmitted to patients through blood transfusion. Blood donations are not tested for malaria because there is no sensitive blood test available for malaria.

If you have traveled or lived in a malaria-risk country, we may require a waiting period before you can donate blood.

- Wait 3 years after completing treatment for malaria.
- Wait 12 months after returning from a trip to an area where malaria is found.
- Wait 3 years after living more than 5 years in a country or countries where malaria is found. An additional waiting period of 3 years may be required if you have traveled to an area where malaria is found if you have not lived a consecutive 3 years in a country or countries where malaria is not found.

If you have traveled outside of the United States and Canada, your travel destinations will be reviewed at the time of donation.

Please, come prepared to discuss your travel details when you donate. You may download the [travel form](#) and bring it with you to help in the assessment of your travel. You can call **866-236-3276** to speak with an eligibility specialist about your travel.

If, in the past 3 years, you have been outside the United States or Canada:

- What countries did you visit?
- Where did you travel while in this country?
- Did you leave the city or resort at any time? If yes, where did you go?
- What mode of transportation did you use?
- How long did you stay?
- What date did you return to the U.S.?

Sickle Cell

Acceptable if you have sickle cell trait. Those with sickle cell disease are not eligible to donate.

Skin Disease, Rash, Acne

Acceptable as long as the skin over the vein to be used to collect blood is not affected. If the skin disease has become infected, wait until the infection has cleared before donating. Taking antibiotics to control acne does not disqualify you from donating.

Tuberculosis

If you have active tuberculosis or are being treated for active tuberculosis you should not donate. Acceptable if you have a positive skin test or blood test, but no active tuberculosis and are NOT taking antibiotics. If you are receiving antibiotics for a positive TB skin test or blood test only or if you are being treated for a tuberculosis infection, wait until treatment is successfully completed before donating.

Medical Treatments

Acupuncture

Donors who have undergone acupuncture treatments are acceptable.

Blood Transfusion

Wait for 12 months after receiving a blood transfusion from another person in the United States.

You may not donate if you received a blood transfusion since 1980 in the United Kingdom or France (The United Kingdom consists of the following countries: England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Channel Islands, Isle of Man, Gibraltar or Falkland Islands). This requirement is related to concerns about variant CJD, or 'mad cow' disease.

Dental Procedures and Oral Surgery

Acceptable after dental procedures as long as there is no infection present. Wait until finishing antibiotics for a dental infection. Wait for 3 days after having oral surgery.

Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT)

Women on hormone replacement therapy for menopausal symptoms and prevention of osteoporosis are eligible to donate.

Organ/Tissue Transplants

Wait 12 months after receiving any type of organ transplant from another person. If you ever received a dura mater (brain covering) transplant, you are not eligible to donate. This requirement is related to concerns about the brain disease, Creutzfeld-Jacob Disease (CJD).

If you ever received a transplant of animal organs or of living animal tissue - you are not eligible to donate blood. Non-living animal tissues such as bone, tendon, or heart valves are acceptable.

Surgery

It is not necessarily surgery but the underlying condition that precipitated the surgery that requires evaluation before donation. Evaluation is on a case by case basis. You should discuss your particular situation with the health historian at the time of donation.

Lifestyle and Life Events

Age

You must be at least 17 years old to donate to the general blood supply, or 16 years old with parental/guardian consent, if allowed by state law. [Learn more](#). There is no upper age limit for blood donation as long as you are well with no restrictions or limitations to your activities.

Donor Deferral for Men Who Have Had Sex with Men (MSM)

On December 21, 2015, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued final guidance for deferral criteria for men who have had sex with men (MSM). AABB, America's Blood Centers and the Red Cross support the FDA's decision to change the MSM blood donation policy from a lifetime deferral to a one-year deferral and additionally for the purposes of blood donation gender is self-identified and self-reported, which is relevant to the transgender community. This policy change aligns the MSM donor deferral period with those for other activities that may pose a similar risk of transfusion-transmissible infections.

First-time male donors may now be eligible to donate blood if they have not had sex with another man in more than 12 months. All additional blood donation eligibility criteria will apply.

Donors who were previously deferred under the prior MSM policy will be evaluated for reinstatement. It is important to understand that the donor reinstatement process involves potentially thousands of donors, and it will take time.

Individuals who have been deferred for MSM in the past may initiate donor reinstatement beginning January 2017 by contacting the Red Cross Donor and Client Support Center at 1-866-236-3276. Individuals with questions about their donation eligibility can contact the Red Cross Donor and Client Support Center at 1-866-236-3276. We appreciate the patience of our valued donors as we continue to diligently work to implement these changes so that more people can give blood for those in need.

[More information about the FDA policy is available for LGBTQ+ donors.](#)

Intravenous Drug Use

Those who have ever used IV drugs that were not prescribed by a physician are not eligible to donate. This requirement is related to concerns about hepatitis and HIV. [Learn more about hepatitis and blood donation.](#)

Pregnancy, Nursing

Women who are pregnant are not eligible to donate. Wait 6 weeks after giving birth.

Tattoo

Wait 12 months after a tattoo if the tattoo was applied in a state that does not regulate tattoo facilities. Currently, the only states that DO NOT regulate tattoo facilities are: District of Columbia, Georgia, Idaho, Maryland, Massachusetts, Nevada, New Hampshire, New York, Pennsylvania, Utah and Wyoming. This requirement is related to concerns about hepatitis. [Learn more about hepatitis and blood donation.](#)

A tattoo is acceptable if the tattoo was applied by a state-regulated entity using sterile needles and ink that is not reused. Cosmetic tattoos applied in a licensed establishment in a regulated state using sterile needles and ink that is not reused is acceptable. You should discuss your particular situation with the health historian at the time of donation.

Sexually Transmitted Diseases

Sexually Transmitted Disease

Wait 12 months after treatment for syphilis or gonorrhea.

Acceptable if it has been more than 12 months since you completed treatment for syphilis or gonorrhea.

Chlamydia, venereal warts (human papilloma virus), or genital herpes are not a cause for deferral if you are feeling healthy and well and meet all other eligibility requirements.

HIV, AIDS

See HIV/AIDS above.

Venereal Diseases

See also "Sexually Transmitted Disease"

Wait 12 months after treatment for syphilis or gonorrhea.

Chlamydia, venereal warts (human papilloma virus), or genital herpes are not a cause for deferral if you are feeling healthy and well and meet all other eligibility requirements.

Syphilis/Gonorrhea

Wait 12 months after treatment for syphilis or gonorrhea.

Unable to Give Blood?

Consider [volunteering](#) or [hosting a blood drive](#) through the Red Cross. You can also help people facing emergencies by [making a financial donation](#) to support the Red Cross's greatest needs. Your gift enables the Red Cross to ensure an ongoing blood supply, provide humanitarian support to families in need and prepare communities by teaching lifesaving skills.