

Facts about blood and its components

- Donors can give either whole blood or specific blood components only. The process of donating specific blood components – red cells, plasma or platelets – is called apheresis.
- One transfusion dose of platelets can be obtained through one apheresis donation of platelets or by combining the platelets derived from five whole blood donations.
- Most donated red blood cells must be used within 42 days of collection.
- Donated platelets must be used within five days of collection – new donations are constantly needed.
- Plasma and cryoprecipitate are stored in frozen state and can be used for up to one year after collection.
- Healthy bone marrow makes a constant supply of red cells, plasma and platelets. The body will replenish the elements given during a blood donation – some in a matter of hours and others in a matter of weeks.

Facts about donors

- The number one reason donors say they give blood is because they “want to help others.”
- Two most common reasons cited by people who don’t give blood are: “Never thought about it” and “I don’t like needles.”
- One donation can help save the lives of up to three people.
- If you began donating blood at age 17 and donated every 56 days until you reached 76, you would have donated 48 gallons of blood, potentially helping save more than 1,000 lives!
- Half of Red Cross donors male, and half are female.
- The American Red Cross accepts blood donations only from volunteer donors.
- Among Red Cross donors in a given year, 19 percent donate occasionally, 31 percent are first-time donors, and 50 percent are regular, loyal donors.
- Only 7 percent of people in the U.S. have O-negative blood type. O-negative blood type donors are universal donors as their blood can be given to people of all blood types.

- Type O-negative blood is needed in emergencies before the patient’s blood type is known and with newborns who need blood.
- Forty-five percent of people in the U.S. have Type O (positive or negative) blood. This percentage is higher among Hispanics – 57 percent, and among African Americans – 51 percent.
- Only 3 percent of people in the U.S. have AB-positive blood type. AB-positive type blood donors are universal donors of plasma, which is often used in emergencies, for newborns and for patients requiring massive transfusions.

Facts about American Red Cross Blood Services

- The American Red Cross blood program started in 1940, under the leadership of Dr. Charles Drew.
- The Red Cross supplies approximately 40 percent of the nation’s blood supply.
- The Red Cross provides blood for patients in nearly 3,000 hospitals across the U.S.
- The Red Cross makes blood available to any patient who needs it — patients are not required to find donors to replace the blood they use (a practice common in Europe and some U.S. blood banks) allowing the patient and their family to focus on recovery.
- Eighty percent of the blood donations given to the Red Cross are collected at mobile blood drives set up at community organizations, companies, high schools, colleges, places of worship or military installations. The remaining 20 percent are collected at fixed Red Cross donor centers.
- The Red Cross works with more than 50,000 blood drive sponsors each year to hold more than 200,000 blood drives, providing convenient locations for people to give blood.
- Red Cross Blood Services operates 36 blood regions and five national testing laboratories.

Source: www.redcrossblood.org

redcrossblood.org
1-800-RED CROSS