

# What you must know to give blood

Making donation safe for you, and  
for those who receive your blood

Please read this brochure

## General information

**Your presence here is voluntary.  
You may leave at any time but  
please inform a staff member.**

- Drinking fluids and eating salty snacks before and after donation will help maintain your blood volume and improve your donation experience.
- Let us know if you are feeling dizzy or unwell at any time during your visit.
- Let us know if you are allergic to latex or the powder used in medical gloves.
- Whether or not you donate, your information may be kept on file.

### Did you know?

You can create your own personal online account at **[www.blood.ca](http://www.blood.ca)** to manage your preferences and much more.

## Before you give...



Have something to eat in the hours before donation. (Avoid fatty foods such as bacon or fried foods).



You will complete a questionnaire.



Have 500 ml (2 cups) of water and a salty snack just before donating.

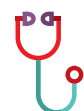


We will confirm your identity.



We will check your:

- Hemoglobin with a finger stick test
- Temperature



We may check your blood pressure.

## While you give...



The needle used to take the blood is new and sterile.



We will collect about 450 ml of blood.



The blood collection usually takes about 10 to 15 minutes.



Let us know immediately if you feel unwell during the donation.

## After you give...



We will apply a pressure bandage on your arm.



We will ask you to do muscle tensing exercises while you rest and before getting up.



You are encouraged to stay in the refreshment area for 15 minutes or so to re-hydrate and have a snack. If you feel faint sit down and rest for a few minutes with your head between your knees or lie down.

## After you leave the donor centre...

- For the rest of the day, drink plenty of fluids such as water or juice (avoid alcoholic beverages).
- When you get home, remove the bandage and wash the donation area with soap and water to prevent a skin rash.
- You should avoid strenuous activity for six to eight hours and heavy lifting for 24 hours after giving blood.
- If you feel faint and you are driving, pull over. Resume only when fully recovered or call for help.
- Jobs that expose you to risk (such as bus drivers and heavy equipment operators) may also require some time off.



**Contact us at 1 888 2 DONATE  
(1.888.236.6283) if:**

- You forgot to tell us something related to your health, travel history or lifestyle.
- You decide your blood should not be used for any reason.
- You experience an adverse reaction (for more information see section on Adverse reactions).
- You get sick or have diarrhea in the week after donating.
- In the next two weeks you are told by a health care provider that you have West Nile virus or Zika virus.
- In the next year, you are told by a health care provider that you have hepatitis or HIV.

## Questions?

Ask a donor centre staff member.

See our website [www.blood.ca](http://www.blood.ca).  
Call **1 888 2 DONATE (1.888.236.6283)**.

For more information on iron,  
go to [www.blood.ca](http://www.blood.ca).

For questions about privacy,  
request our privacy brochure.

For questions about *What  
happens to your donation*, search  
Brochures on [www.blood.ca](http://www.blood.ca).

## Adverse reactions

A small number of donors may:

- Feel tired for a day or two.
- Get a bruise, redness or a rash at the needle site:
  - Apply ice on and off if there is swelling.
  - Use acetaminophen (Tylenol) for pain.
- Feel faint, dizzy and/or nauseated.
- Faint and/or have muscle spasms.
- Suffer nerve damage, arm pain or numbness:
  - Apply ice on and off if there is swelling.
  - Use acetaminophen (Tylenol) for pain.



Consult a health care provider if any of these symptoms persist or are concerning to you.

## Hemoglobin and iron

Your red cells are rich in hemoglobin which contains iron.

Because your blood donation contains red cells, you will lose some iron.

Those most at risk of developing iron deficiency due to blood donation are:

- Young donors 17 to 25 years old.
- Menstruating females.
- Frequent blood donors (twice a year for women and three times a year for men).

Iron deficiency due to blood donation can be prevented.

**Replenish the iron lost in donation with a daily iron pill taken for two months.**

Check with your health care provider before starting iron supplementation as it may be harmful in some individuals or mask an underlying medical condition.



A diet rich in iron is advised for all donors but may not be enough to replenish the iron lost from your blood donation.



Ask your health care provider about the need to check your iron stores (ferritin test).

**If untreated, iron deficiency can lead to anemia (low hemoglobin)**

- Symptoms of anemia include fatigue and reduced exercise tolerance.

## HIV and hepatitis

- Sexual contact<sup>1</sup> or the sharing of needles or syringes can contribute to the spread of HIV and hepatitis.
- Because the tests for HIV and hepatitis cannot detect all infections, you will be asked about certain risk activities.

**Testing your blood before transfusion...**

We will test your blood group (ABO and Rh) on every donation.

<sup>1</sup>Sexual contact means the following, even if a condom or barrier device was used:

- Vaginal intercourse (contact between the penis and vagina).
- Oral sex (mouth or tongue on someone's vagina, penis or anus).
- Anal intercourse (contact between the penis and anus).

Your blood will also be tested for the following infectious diseases as they are known to spread to others through blood:

## Tested with every donation

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Hepatitis B virus*                  | 4. Syphilis*                               |
| 2. Hepatitis C virus*                  | 5. Human T-cell lymphotropic virus (HTLV)* |
| 3. Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)* |  |

## Tested as required

- |                     |                          |
|---------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Chagas disease*  | 4. Cytomegalovirus (CMV) |
| 2. West Nile virus* | 5. Bacteria              |
| 3. Parvovirus B19   | 6. Hepatitis E virus     |

Other tests may be done on some donations as required. These include testing for other blood groups, screening for uncommon hemoglobins if your blood is used for patients with special needs, and ferritin (iron stores).

You will be informed of unusual results from any of the tests that we perform.

**\*If the test result is abnormal:**

- You will be notified.
- Your blood will not be used.
- Except for West Nile virus, you will no longer be eligible to donate blood.
- The public health office will be informed of positive test results, as required by law.