



**American
Red Cross**

The need is constant.
The gratification is instant.
Give blood.

General Blood and Platelet Donor Eligibility Guidelines

Thank you for your interest in donating blood or platelets. Your donation helps patients in need. If you cannot donate blood or platelets, there may be opportunities to help the American Red Cross Blood Services by volunteering in other ways. If you would like to make an appointment to donate, have questions about donating, or wish to find out more about other ways to volunteer, please call 1-800-GIVE-LIFE (1-800-448-3543). If you have specific eligibility questions, you may contact a local representative in your state. **In Arkansas, Kansas, Mississippi, Oklahoma and Texas call (866) 210-5495. Or in Illinois, Kentucky, Missouri and Tennessee call (866) 236-3276.**

Please note: The following is not a complete list of eligibility guidelines. Medical professionals are available at each blood donation center to discuss details of each donor's health history confidentially prior to blood donation. The final determination of eligibility is made at that time.

Some donor eligibility rules are specified by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for every blood bank in the country. Other rules are determined by the particular

blood bank and may differ between Red Cross and non-Red Cross donor centers. Donor eligibility guidelines are intended to protect the health and safety of both the donor as well as the patient who will receive the transfusion.

The criteria listed below are provided as **guidelines** to assist you in determining whether you are eligible to be a donor.

NOTE: Donor eligibility criteria are subject to change.

GENERAL GUIDELINES: To give blood or platelets, you must be *healthy*, weigh at least 110 pounds, and be at least 17 years old. In Arkansas, Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Missouri and Tennessee, 16 year olds may donate with a completed **Parental or Legal Guardian Consent Form**.

Healthy means you feel well and can perform normal activities. If you have a chronic condition such as diabetes or high blood pressure, *healthy* could also mean you are being treated and the condition is under control.

Blood can be donated no sooner than every 56 days, and platelets can be donated up to 24 times per year. Each potential donor receives a brief examination where temperature, pulse, blood pressure and blood iron (hemoglobin or hematocrit) are determined.

Allergy, stuffy nose, itchy eyes, dry cough: Acceptable as long as you feel well, have no fever, and have no problems breathing.

Antibiotics: Must have finished antibiotics for an infection (bacterial) and free of symptoms. Acceptable if you are taking antibiotics to prevent an infection, for example, following dental procedures or for acne. If you have a temperature above 99.5 degrees Fahrenheit, you may not donate until your temperature drops to or below 99.5 degrees Fahrenheit.

ASPIRIN — SPECIAL NOTE: If you take aspirin or other medication containing aspirin, you **must wait 48 hours to donate platelets**. If taking an anti-platelet drug (e.g., Plavix®), the donor must wait seven days after the last dose before giving platelets.

Asthma: Acceptable as long as you are not having difficulty breathing at the time of donation, and you otherwise feel well. Medications for asthma do not prevent you from donating.

Blood exposure to someone else's blood: Donors must wait 12 months before giving blood, if they were exposed to someone else's blood, usually through contact with non-intact skin, exposure to mucus membranes or via needle stick. This includes sharing toothbrush or razors with another person.

Blood pressure medications: Donors who are taking blood pressure medication are evaluated for acceptability by their blood pressure reading on the day of donation.

Botox injections: Acceptable under certain conditions.

Cancer: Acceptable if the cancer was treated and it has been at least one year since treatment was completed with no cancer recurrence. If you had leukemia or lymphoma, including Hodgkin's Disease and mycosis fungoides, you are not eligible to donate. Some low-risk cancers, including squamous or basal cell cancers of the skin, do not require a waiting period.

Certain precancerous conditions, such as those of the cervix or the colon, do not prevent you from giving blood, if the condition has been treated successfully.

You should discuss your particular situation with the Red Cross health historian at the time of donation.

Cholesterol, high: Acceptable. Medications to lower cholesterol levels do not disqualify you from donating.

Cold, flu, sore throat: Wait if you have a fever or a productive cough (bringing up phlegm). Wait if you don't feel well on the day of donation. Wait until you have completed antibiotic treatment for and are recovered from sinus, throat or lung infection.

If you have any questions about donating blood or donor eligibility requirements, please call 1-800-GIVE-LIFE or visit bloodisneeded.org.