

# National Blood Donor Month

## Quick Facts about Blood

- Every two seconds someone in America needs blood.
- More than 38,000 pints of blood are needed in U.S. every day.
- Only 38 percent of the population is eligible to donate and just a fraction of those—about 8 percent—actually donate.
- For every unit of blood that is donated as many as three lives can be saved!!
- You can donate whole blood every 56 days up to 6 times a year, platelets up to 24 times per year, plasma every 28 days, up to 13 times a year; and double red cells every 112 days up to three times a year.
- Visit the American Red Cross website to find out more about blood donation

## Your blood is needed by more than just you!

There are about one billion red blood cells in two to three drops of blood, and for every 600 red blood cells, there are about 40 platelets and one white cells. Each blood component has a different job. Whole blood contains, white cells and platelets suspended in plasma. Because patients seldom require all of the components of whole blood, it is rarely transfused as a unit. Instead is separated into units of red cells, platelets, and plasma before it reaches the patient. Red cells contain hemoglobin, an iron containing protein that carries oxygen throughout the body and gives blood its red color. This component is most often needed by trauma or surgical patients. Platelets are vital to life because they help prevent massive blood loss by helping blood to clot. Because they are sticky cells, they need to be in constant motion after they are donated or they will clump and cannot be transfused. They also have a very short shelf life of only 5 days. Platelets are most often used by cancer patients, organ transplant patients, and surgical patients. Plasma is the liquid portion of the blood that carries platelets, red cells and proteins throughout the body. Plasma is made up of about 90 percent water (another good reason to drink more water) and constitutes more than 55 percent of total blood volume. Burn patients and patients with bleeding disorders are the most common recipients. This product has a shelf life of one year if frozen.

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## Common Questions about Donating Blood

**Q.** What can I expect at my donation? **A.** In a confidential and private setting you'll answer some questions about your health history and the places you have traveled. You'll have your blood pressure and temperature checked and your iron level checked. Your blood will be retrieved using a sterile needle and container. After donation you can relax and enjoy a snack in the refreshment area and take pleasure in knowing that your blood donation may

have helped save up to three lives.

**Q.** Can I find out my blood type? **A.** Yes. About six weeks after your donation ,you will receive a donation card in the mail bearing your blood type.

**Q.** What if I have recently gotten a tattoo and/or body piercing? **A.** If your tattoo was

applied in a state-regulated/ licensed tattoo facility, you may be able to donate. You may donate after a body piercing as long as a sterile needle was used. Otherwise you must wait one year after receiving a tattoo or body piercing.

**Q.** Will I become anemic after donating? **A.** Most people do not become anemic after donating. The body begins to replenish lost fluid and red cells within 24