

Suncoast Communities Blood Bank
Sarasota, FL

WHO CAN DONATE BLOOD?

AGE

Donors who are at least 16 years old can donate blood. By state law, 16-year-olds must have the signed consent of their parent or guardian.

WEIGHT

Donors must weigh at least 110 lbs on the day of donation.

HEMOGLOBIN

Donors must have adequate iron levels to donate blood. This means their hemoglobin level must be at least 12.5 g/dL.

MINI-PHYSICAL

Donors must have a pulse of 50-100 beats/minute and a temperature of less than 99.6 F. High school students must have a blood pressure at least 90/60 and less than 180/100. Before being released after donating, high school donors must have a post-donation blood pressure of at least 90/60.

GOOD HEALTH

Donors must be healthy and feel well on the day of donation. Donors who are taking antibiotics for an infection are temporarily deferred. Donors who have a cold or flu are temporarily deferred.

TATTOOS

Donors who have had a tattoo are temporarily deferred for 12 months after the tattoo is applied.

BODY PIERCING

Donors who have had body piercing performed with sterile, single-use needles are not deferred. Body piercing performed under non-sterile conditions results in a 12-month deferral.

TRAVEL HISTORY

Donors who have traveled to an area where malaria is present are deferred for 12 months after returning from the area.

MEDICATIONS

Most medications are allowed. However, donors who are taking Accutane for acne, or Soriatan or Tegison for psoriasis, are deferred.

VACCINATION

Vaccination for seasonal flu or H1N1 flu is not a cause for deferral.

PREPARING FOR DONATION

The day before you give blood you should eat regular meals and have a normal dinner. Get a good night's sleep so that your body will be in top-notch condition. **On the day of donation you need to eat a nutritious breakfast and drink plenty of fluids.**

THE DONATION PROCESS

Giving blood is easy and takes less than 45 minutes, door-to-door. You will go through a 3-step process:

PHYSICAL EXAM AND HEALTH HISTORY

You will be given a mini-physical that includes checking your pulse, temperature, blood pressure and hemoglobin (iron level). You must be feeling healthy and have a hemoglobin level of at least 12.5 g/dL in order to donate.

You will also be asked to answer questions on a health history questionnaire. This helps us to determine your eligibility to donate and is one way we ensure the safety of the blood supply. Being honest is important!

DRINKING WATER

Studies have shown that drinking water before donation helps our donors to have a better donation experience. Therefore, you will be asked to drink a small bottle of water just prior to donating.

GIVING BLOOD

The actual donation of blood takes only about seven minutes, and most donors find the procedure relatively comfortable. As you recline in a chair, a needle is gently inserted into your arm. Blood is gradually collected into a special bag that contains anticoagulant to keep the blood from clotting. Some donors find it helpful to practice Applied Muscle Tension (AMT) during donation. By periodically contracting the various muscles of your body, you are distracted as the collection takes place.

Some larger donors qualify for a 2-unit red cell automated donation (apheresis). This donation procedure takes about 40 minutes and replaces donated blood with a saline solution. Most apheresis donors experience very few reactions because their fluids are replaced as the donation takes place.

REST AND REFRESHMENT

After donation, you will be asked to rest in the donation chair a few minutes. When comfortable, you will be asked to sit on the edge of the chair with your feet dangling down. When you are ready, you will be escorted to the refreshment area where you will be encouraged to rest for at least 15 minutes. Here you are given juice, snacks and other refreshments to help replenish your fluids and energy. Before being released, your blood pressure will be checked. Aside from refraining from heavy lifting and strenuous physical activity for at least 4 hours, you can then resume your normal daily activities.