

Patients in Our Community Need a Diverse Blood Supply



Every day, more than 10,000 patients—from those undergoing long-term transfusion treatments to accident victims—rely on the generosity of blood donors to survive.

The percentage of ethnically diverse patients who have a need for rare blood continues to increase, yet ethnically diverse blood donors continue to be a very small part of the overall blood donor population nationwide.

Patients with conditions like sickle cell disease, cancer, lupus or kidney failure require frequent blood transfusions. They are more likely to find a match and less likely to have physical reactions to blood donated by donors of the same race. That's why it's so important to maintain an ethnically diverse blood supply in your community.



Importance of Blood Donation

Versiti is part of the American Rare Donor Program

The American Rare Donor Program (ARDP) maintains a comprehensive database of donors with rare blood types for healthcare professionals and difficult-to-transfuse patients. These patients and donors often come from ethnically diverse communities.

Some African Americans have rare blood types that are unique to the African American community, and appear in only a few people. A person with a rare blood type doesn't have better or worse blood than anyone else; it's just a genetic difference.

Some rare blood types occur in only 1 in 5,000 people. Because some of these blood types are so unique, blood from rare donors may be someone's only hope for survival.

Sickle Cell Disease

Sickle cell disease predominately affects African Americans and can cause bouts of debilitating pain. Many sickle cell patients require regular blood transfusions to treat their symptoms; they typically see the best results when they receive a transfusion from a donor with the same ethnic background.

Many people with sickle cell disease receive treatment at our Adult Sickle Cell Clinic, established by Blood Research Institute investigator Josh Field, M.D., to offer better treatment options for adults suffering from the disease.



Why Marrow Donation Matters

Every day, thousands of patients with life-threatening disorders like leukemia, severe anemia and sickle cell disease search for a bone marrow donor who can make their transplant possible and cure their disease.

These patients depend on the Be The Match® registry to find a match, and patients are more likely to match a donor from their own race or ethnicity. But out of a donor registry of millions, only a small portion comes from ethnically diverse backgrounds.

Diversity is critical in treating patients who need bone marrow transplants. By joining Be The Match®, you are giving hope to others in your community.

Tia Wilson bravely battled sickle cell anemia. When she was just three years old, Tia had a stroke. She was hospitalized and began getting blood transfusions every four weeks.

After 4 years of treatments, in June 2015 at the age of 7, Tia got a bone marrow transplant from her older brother and is doing great.

For more information call 866-MIBLOOD or visit [versiti.org/michigan](https://www.versiti.org/michigan)