



FACT VERSUS FICTION

KNOW YOUR FACTS ABOUT BLOOD DONATION

FICTION

“Beyond differing blood types, our blood is all the same.”



“Donating blood is painful, tiring and time consuming.”



“My tattoos and piercings prevent me from being able to donate blood.”



“Legally, queer men are not able to donate blood.”



“Other people are donating blood, so I don't need to.”

37%

“Donating blood could have an adverse effect on my own health.”



“I probably cannot donate blood due to my medication or Chronic health condition.”



FACT

Not quite! Our blood is full of antigens, which are often similar within ethnic groups. Blood that closely matches that of a patient is less likely to be rejected by the patient and can mean fewer complications after a transfusion. Representation matters; donors of all races and ethnicities are needed to serve patients in our communities.

Incorrect! The process for whole blood donation usually takes about one hour. The blood collection itself only takes roughly 10 minutes. While pain and fatigue are relative terms, most people are energized and ready to leave after chilling for 15 minutes. We even provide snacks while you wait!

Nope! As long as your tattoo or piercing has healed and was done in a state licensed facility, you are able to donate blood. If it was not done at a state licensed facility or has not healed, a three-month waiting period is required before you are eligible to donate blood.

This is false! The FDA recently relaxed the deferral period from 12 months to 3 months, meaning men having sex with men (known as MSM) must only wait 3 months after the last point of sexual contact.

Actually, while 37% of the US population is qualified to donate blood, only about 4% actually do so. If just 1% more of Americans donated blood, it is estimated that all blood supply shortages would disappear for the foreseeable future. Not to mention, just one blood donation can save up to three lives!

Not at all! Because all blood products are tested before use, there is no risk of contracting any disease or infection during the donation process. Additionally, the human body contains about 10 pints of blood, and a typical donor only gives 1 pint during a donation.

While all cases are different, many medications don't prevent individuals from donating. And as far as people with chronic health conditions are concerned, they often can also donate blood! Common diseases like diabetes, asthma and Lyme disease do not exempt people from donating blood.



FAQs

ABOUT BLOOD DONATION

1. Is donating blood safe?

Yes, donating blood is safe. The donor questionnaire ensures both that the donation is safe for the donor, and that the blood collected is safe for a recipient. A sterile kit, including the needle, is used only once to collect your blood and is then thrown away. You cannot contract any diseases from donating blood. We know that historically, communities of color have experienced a sense of distrust with the healthcare industry because of malpractice and the lack of transparency. We want you to know that Versiti is committed to the safety of our donors and the patients we serve. That's why we've enacted procedures to ensure safe outcomes for everyone.

2. Who needs blood?

Donated blood, platelets and plasma are used for a variety of patients, including: accident victims and surgical patients, leukemia and other cancer patients, and in the treatment of patients suffering from burns or shock.

3. Why is Ro blood special to communities?

The incredibly rare Ro blood type is found in 44% of African American and 17% of Latino donors. This type is crucial for the many sickle cell disease patients who rely on frequent transfusions—most of whom are African American or Latino. Matching blood from donors of a similar ethnic background is more likely to be effective for the patient and often results in fewer complications.

4. What happens to my blood?

After your blood is collected, it is sent to Versiti labs for testing. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) requires that all donated blood undergo a series of lab tests before it is given to patients. In addition to the required testing, Versiti takes special care to identify the Ro genetic markers needed to support sickle cell patients. We currently perform 15 separate tests on each unit of donated blood. If a unit of blood passes all these tests, it is safe for patients.

5. I have low iron. Can I still donate blood?

Possibly. The FDA sets the standard for hemoglobin levels in donors. If your hemoglobin is below the normal range, or if this is not the first time you've been deferred for a low hemoglobin level, Versiti recommends you discuss your test results with your healthcare provider. The prevalence of iron deficiency anemia is 2% in adult men, 9-12% in non-Hispanic white women, and nearly 20% in Black and Mexican-American women. Eating iron-rich foods that are high in vitamin C may help correct iron deficiency in some individuals; however, most will need to take oral iron supplements in order to increase their blood count enough to donate blood.

6. Does Versiti sell or share my personal information?

Your personal information is protected under HIPAA privacy laws. Versiti does not sell, trade or share our donors' health information with any other organizations unless the donor has given us specific permission to do so.

Versiti is a nonprofit organization and does not earn money on donated blood. Hospitals reimburse us for the cost of collecting, processing, testing and distributing blood. Any fees blood recipients may incur are given by hospitals and are typically covered by insurance.

7. If I am an undocumented immigrant, am I able to donate blood?

Nothing prevents undocumented immigrants from giving blood, and our Versiti employees do not check immigration status. All blood donors must show some form of photo identification, including a driver's license, state-issued ID card, student ID card, passport, visa or green card, and fill out a health questionnaire. Your health information is protected under HIPAA privacy laws. This information is kept confidential and is not shared with any outside organization, aside from required reporting of positive infectious disease test results to appropriate agencies.

[versiti.org/faq/blood-donation-faq](https://www.versiti.org/faq/blood-donation-faq)

