



**CASCADE REGIONAL  
BLOOD SERVICES**  
YOUR COMMUNITY BLOOD CENTER

# FACTS ABOUT DONATING **BLOOD**

## **WHY SHOULD I DONATE BLOOD?**

Blood donors save lives. The majority of the population will need blood products in their lifetime, and blood donors are important to sustaining our blood supply.

## **WHO CAN DONATE BLOOD?**

You can donate if you are in good health, weigh at least 110 pounds and are at least 16 years old (if you are 16 to 17 years old, you must have parent/guardian permission to donate). If you are over 76 years of age, a doctor's note is no longer required, providing you meet donation eligibility requirements.

## **DOES IT HURT TO GIVE BLOOD?**

The sensation you feel is similar to a slight pinch on the arm. The process of drawing blood should take less than ten minutes.

## **SHOULD I EAT BEFORE DONATING?**

Yes. Eat a substantial meal, drink plenty of fluids and avoid caffeine, alcohol and tobacco products.

## **WHAT CAN I EXPECT AT THE TIME OF DONATION?**

You will receive a mini-physical by a donor specialist which includes pulse, blood pressure, temperature and testing your iron level. If these tests and the review of your medical history are satisfactory, you may donate. The entire process takes approximately 40-50 minutes.

## **CAN MY BLOOD BE GIVEN TO ANYONE?**

Yes, if a patient's blood type is compatible with your blood type. You can learn where your blood type can go on our Blood Compatibility & Components informational sheet.

## **HOW MUCH BLOOD DO I HAVE?**

An adult has approximately 10-11 pints.

## **HOW MUCH BLOOD WILL I BE DONATING?**

Whole blood donors give 500 ml, or approximately one pint.

## **CAN I BE TAKING CERTAIN MEDICATIONS AND STILL DONATE?**

Yes. If you have a question, please call (253) 383-2553. A donor specialist can answer your medication questions and review your medical history with you.

## **HOW QUICKLY DOES MY BODY REPLACE BLOOD?**

Fluids are replaced in about 24 hours. After four to six weeks, your body has reproduced the cells and replaced lost minerals.

## **WHAT HAPPENS TO BLOOD AFTER IT IS DONATED?**

After the blood is tested, it is separated into components. It is then distributed to local hospitals and trauma centers for patient transfusions.

## **WHAT ARE COMPONENTS?**

Some common components are: red blood cells that are used to replace cells in patients due to surgery or trauma, platelets that are used to control or prevent bleeding in surgery and trauma patients, and plasma that is used to increase the level of clotting factors in patients who are deficient or have suffered severe burns. Cancer patients often require red cells and platelets.

## **WHEN CAN I DONATE AGAIN?**

You can donate whole blood every eight weeks (56 days). Platelets can be donated every seven days; however, you may only donate a maximum of 24 times in a rolling twelve-month period. We ask donors to donate every 14 days, unless an extraordinary situation exists.

## **WHAT IF I DON'T KNOW MY BLOOD TYPE?**

Every time you donate, your blood is typed. After your first donation, a donor card with your blood type is mailed to you.

## **WHAT IF I STILL HAVE MORE QUESTIONS?**

Please feel free to contact one of our donor specialists at (877) 24-BLOOD or visit our website at [www.crbs.net](http://www.crbs.net).