



Live Well, Work Well

Health and wellness tips for your work, home and life—brought to you by the insurance professionals at The Reschini Group

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BLOOD DONATION

Blood is needed for many reasons, including during emergencies and for people with cancer, blood disorders, sickle cell anemia, and other illnesses. However, blood can only come from a volunteer donor - meaning donating blood can be the difference between life and death.

Who can donate?

In general, to donate blood, you must be healthy, at least 17 years old, weigh at least 110 pounds, and not have donated blood in the past 56 days. Depending on state law, 16 year olds may be able to donate with parental consent.

Women who are pregnant are not allowed to donate. If you recently traveled outside of the United States, you will be asked a series of questions to determine eligibility.

Is donating blood safe?

Absolutely. The needles and bags used to collect the blood are sterile, only used once, and then discarded.

Can I donate if I've been turned down before?

Yes, you should try to donate again. Most reasons for donors being turned down are only temporary (for example, due to recent travel outside of the United States or a recent immunization).

Should I give blood now or wait until I am called?

If you want to donate, don't wait. Eligible donors are encouraged to donate as often as possible. To schedule an appointment, call 1-800-RED-CROSS.

How long does it take to donate?

Donating blood takes about an hour and 15 minutes. The process starts with registration, a health history, and a mini-physical. Then, if eligible, you move on to the actual donation, which usually only takes about eight to 10 minutes. The final step is enjoying refreshments while your body adjusts to the slight decrease in fluid volume.

How much blood is taken—will it make me weak?

You will only lose approximately one pint of blood. The vast majority of donors do not feel any different after their donation. A small percentage of people feel lightheaded, dizzy, or have an upset stomach after donating blood. Your body will replace the lost fluid within 24 hours.

Can I direct my blood donation to the military?

Yes, you can. The American Red Cross has created a network that will help direct your blood donation to the areas of the country—or world—where it is needed the most.

How can I ensure a pleasant donation experience?

To ensure a positive experience, try the following tips:

- Get a good night's sleep before donating.
- Eat a good breakfast or lunch before you donate.
- Make sure you have adequate iron levels by eating iron-rich foods such as clams, spinach, beef, and poultry.
- Wear a shirt with short sleeves or sleeves that can easily be pushed over the elbow.
- Drink plenty of fluids beforehand, but avoid caffeine.

After donating blood, take the following precautions:

- Make sure to eat and drink something at the facility and continue drinking non-alcoholic fluids over the next 24 to 48 hours to rehydrate.
- Avoid heavy lifting or strenuous exercise for the remainder of the day.
- Eat well and consider adding iron-rich foods to your diet to replace iron lost during your blood donation.

By donating a pint of blood, you can help up to three people in need. Use the tips above to ensure a positive blood donation experience.

