

# A Student's Guide to Blood Donation

## Why Should I Give Blood? Because You Can Make a Difference!

Almost everyone during their life will know someone who needs a blood transfusion. They may be car accident and trauma victims, cancer or transplant patients, and people with sickle cell disease or other blood disorders. There is no substitute and still only one source of blood for transfusion – volunteer blood donors.

This guide will provide you with information about measures you can take before, during, and after donation for a good experience.

**Learning more about blood donation and knowing what to expect should improve your donation experience.**

## What Happens During the Blood Donation Process?

### 1. Registration

- Remember to bring your photo ID and, if required, the signed parental consent form.
- Bring the names of medications that you are taking.
- Bring a list of the places you have traveled outside the US and Canada in the last 12 months.
- Read the educational materials about donating whole blood or apheresis.
- Ask Red Cross staff if you have questions.

### 2. Health History & Mini Physical

- You should feel healthy and well, and meet other criteria.
- We will take your temperature, check your blood count, and measure your blood pressure and pulse.
- We will ask you questions during a private and confidential interview. This protects your health and the safety of patients who receive blood transfusions.

### 3. Donation

- We will cleanse an area of your arm and insert a needle to draw whole blood.
- You can relax, listen to music, talk to other donors or read while the blood is collected.
- After the collection, a staff member will remove the needle and place a bandage on your arm.

### 4. Refreshments

- You should spend 15 minutes or more enjoying refreshments in the recovery area.
- If you become dizzy or light-headed, stay in the recovery area and tell a staff member immediately.

## What Should I Do To Prepare? Before Donation

**Sleep:** Get at least eight hours of sleep the night before your donation.

**Eat:** Eat a healthy breakfast or lunch - or both if your appointment is later in the day.

- Don't skip meals on the day of a donation.
- Make healthy food choices. Eat proteins (lean meat, cheese, and yogurt) or complex carbohydrates (bread, cereal, and fruit).
- Include iron-rich foods in your regular diet (red meat, fish, poultry, beans, iron-fortified cereals, and raisins).

**Drink:** Drink a few extra glasses of water or fluids in the days before you donate. Start the day with a bottle of water or a glass of orange juice.

**If you drink water within 10-30 minutes before donation,** you may be less likely to experience dizziness and light-headedness.

## During Donation

**Most people relax during donation and feel fine afterwards.** Sometimes it helps to think about something else to distract your attention from the blood being drawn.

You may also be told to try a simple technique to tense and relax the muscles in your legs:

- Lift your legs (one at a time) off the donor bed.
- Hold for a few seconds, then repeat.
- Breathe normally.

If you practice this technique to tense and relax the muscles in your legs during the donation, you may be less likely to have a reaction.

**Tell Red Cross staff immediately what you are experiencing and they will take care of you. There are ways to help prevent or limit discomfort with donation.**

## After Donation

**Be sure to sit and relax in the refreshment area for 15 minutes or more and have a drink and a snack.** Afterward, drink a few glasses of fluids to stay well-hydrated.

Most donors have uneventful donations and feel good about donating. Some people may experience light-headedness, dizziness, or an upset stomach that resolves soon after donation. Less commonly, a donor may faint after blood donation. If you feel faint, stop what you are doing and sit or lie down until you feel better.

**Call the American Red Cross toll-free number provided to you after your donation if you have questions or concerns.**



# A Student's Guide to Blood Donation

## Student Athletes

Student athletes should wait about 12 hours or more to resume strenuous exercise after blood donation, depending on how they feel. You temporarily lose fluid after donation which your body replaces within 24 hours or sooner if you drink extra fluids. As a precaution, do not donate blood on the same day of a competition or strenuous practice.

After a whole blood donation, your body replaces the red blood cells (the cells that deliver oxygen to muscles and tissues) within about 5 weeks, depending on nutrition and iron status. High-performance competitive athletes may notice a marginal decrease in exercise tolerance for about 1 week after a whole blood donation.

**Plan ahead to best schedule your donation with sports and other activities.**

## Information for Parents

**Parental permission is required for all 16-year-olds to donate blood.** It may or may not be required for 17-year-olds depending on state laws and school requirements.

**When we are required to obtain parental consent,** your son or daughter will need to turn in a signed consent form to the donation site each time he or she plans to donate.

**Most donors have uneventful donations and do fine afterwards.** Some donors may become light-headed or dizzy during or after the donation or may faint or experience other injury requiring additional medical care. Young, first-time, and/or low weight donors are more likely to experience reactions than other donors.

**Every donation is tested for HIV (the virus that causes AIDS), hepatitis B and hepatitis C viruses, and other infectious diseases.** If any test result or response to the questions suggests that your son or daughter is disqualified from donating blood in the future or may have an infectious disease, their name will be added to a confidential list of people who have similar test results or risk factors. When required, we report donor information, including test results, to health departments and regulatory agencies.

The infectious disease tests are very sensitive and specific but **it is possible that donors who are not infected will have falsely positive results.** We are required to notify and disqualify donors even when subsequent test results indicate that the donor is not infected.

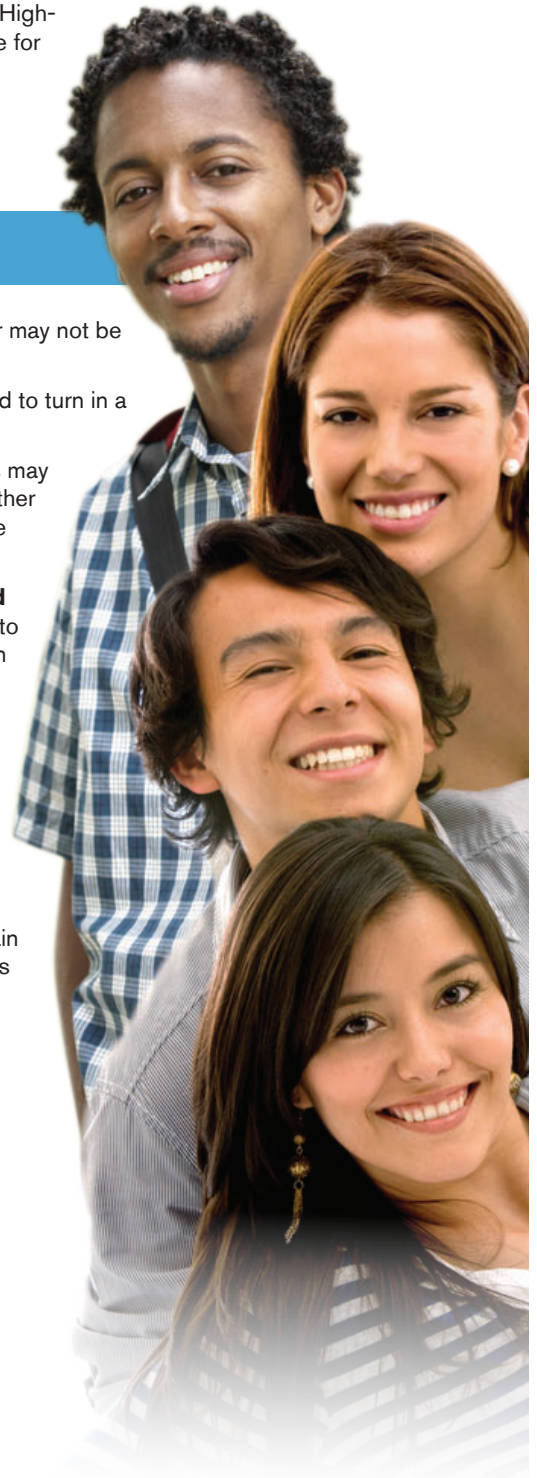
**We will communicate test results directly with your son/daughter.** We maintain the confidentiality of information we obtain about a donor, and we will release a donor's confidential information to his or her parents only with the donor's consent.

**We may use information or residual blood samples we collect from donors confidentially and anonymously for medical research.** Examples of this type of research include studies to increase the safety of the blood supply.

**If you have questions about blood donation, please contact the American Red Cross.**



**1-800-GIVE-LIFE | [givelife.org](http://givelife.org)**



American Red Cross Biomedical Services	Doc No 14.4.frm005	Version 1.4
<p><b>Form:</b></p> <p><b>Parental Consent for Blood Donation</b></p>		

## What this form is about

This form provides staff with a mechanism for documenting a parent or legal guardian's informed consent for a minor to donate blood or blood components, where such consent is required by state law or Red Cross policy.

## Who should use this form

This form applies to all staff who obtain informed special consent from parents or legal guardians.

## Instructions

Parental consent is required for all donations by 16-year-olds. Parental consent may be required for 17-year-olds depending on state law or sponsor requirements.

The parental consent form has separate signature lines: one for consent for whole blood donation only and one for whole blood and apheresis donation.

In order for the legal guardian to make an informed decision, he or she must be given the following information:

- A Student's Guide to Blood Donation [[14.4.ref036](#)]
- Other applicable information about participating in research
- All donations by minors in support of research require parental consent, even when parental permission is not required for volunteer blood donation, unless the requirement for consent is waived by the Institutional Review Board (IRB).
- Ensure the region-identifying information is on the form.
- There is a separate consent signature line for parental consent for apheresis and/or blood donation. If this line is not signed by the parent, the minor may not be permitted to donate apheresis.
- Instruct the parent/legal guardian to
  - Print the name of the son, daughter, or ward in the space provided.
  - Print his or her name.
  - Sign the consent form.
  - Date the consent form.
- Affix a whole blood number/donation identification number (WBN/DIN) to the form.

## Revision History

Revision Number	Summary of Revisions
1.0	Initial version
1.1	Developed and released prior to revision history requirement
1.2	Revised instructions for completion of form Reformatted signature, date, and WBN lines
1.3	<p>Changed the title to Parental Consent for Blood Donation</p> <p>Added to the Instructions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All donations by minors in support of research require parental consent, even when parental permission is not required for volunteer blood donation, unless the requirement for consent is waived by the Institutional Review Board (IRB).</li> <li>• The requirement for obtaining parental consent for apheresis: A minor must have both the parental consent and the apheresis consent signed by the parent or guardian in order to donate apheresis. The apheresis consent can be printed on a separate piece of paper or printed on the back of the parental consent form. If both consents are not signed, the donor cannot donate apheresis.</li> </ul> <p>Added to the form:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two new documents that the parent must read: “Young Donors Make a Difference” and, if the Red Cross will be asking the minor to donate blood by apheresis, “Informed Consent for Apheresis Blood Collection”</li> <li>• Space for optional phone number for parent/guardian</li> <li>• Revised permission to include apheresis if applicable</li> </ul>
1.4	<p>Added a separate signature line for apheresis consent and removed the requirement that the apheresis consent must be signed.</p> <p>Removed “What You Must Know Before Giving Blood” and “What You Must Know About NAT” from the list of documents to be read by the parent or legal guardian. This information has been included on the back page of the form.</p> <p>Added the requirement that the parent or legal guardian read the Information for Parents on the back of consent form.</p>

###

# Parental Consent for Blood Donation



## Information

This form must be completed by a parent or legal guardian for blood donation by a minor when parental consent is required by state law or American Red Cross policy.

If you have questions or concerns about the blood donation process, please contact:

Name/Department: Collections Office

Phone: (800) 542- 5663

During Hours of Operation: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday

In giving consent for your son, daughter, or ward to donate blood, you have two options:

1. You may consent to whole blood donation only, or
2. You may consent to both whole blood donation and apheresis (*see back of form for details*).

## Parental Consent

I have read and understand:

- The information on the back of this form
- "A Student's Guide to Blood Donation"
- Any research-related study sheets that may be provided

**Please Complete Section 1 OR Section 2** (Please use medium-point black pen.)

### 1. Whole Blood Donation Only:

*I hereby give permission for my son, daughter, or ward to make a whole blood donation to the American Red Cross.*

**Donor Name:** (son, daughter, or ward) \_\_\_\_\_  
*Print Name*

**Parent/Guardian Name:** \_\_\_\_\_  
*Print Name*

**Parent/Guardian Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Today's Date:** \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_  
*Signature* *m m / d d / y y y y*

**Optional Parent/Guardian Phone Number:** ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_  
*Where you can be reached on the day of the blood donation*

### 2. Whole Blood Donation and Apheresis:

*I hereby give permission for my son, daughter, or ward to give blood by either whole blood donation or apheresis.*

**Donor Name:** (son, daughter, or ward) \_\_\_\_\_  
*Print Name*

**Parent/Guardian Name:** \_\_\_\_\_  
*Print Name*

**Parent/Guardian Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Today's Date:** \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_  
*Signature* *m m / d d / y y y y*

**Optional Parent/Guardian Phone Number:** ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_  
*Where you can be reached on the day of the blood donation*

**For American Red Cross Use Only WBN/DIN →**

## Information for Parents

Please read the information below, which supplements the brochure called “A Student’s Guide to Blood Donation.”

### Donor Screening

- We will ask your son or daughter questions about his or her health and medication use, sexual behavior, travel, and other risk factors for infectious diseases during a private and confidential interview.
- Every donation is tested for HIV (the virus that causes AIDS), hepatitis B and hepatitis C viruses, and other infectious diseases.
- If any test result or response to the questions suggests that your son or daughter is disqualified from donating blood in the future or may have an infectious disease, his or her name will be added to a confidential list of people who have similar test results or risk factors. When required, we report donor information, including test results, to health departments and regulatory agencies.
- The tests are very sensitive and detect most infections. But it is also possible that donors who are not infected will have falsely positive results. We are required to notify and disqualify donors even when subsequent test results indicate that the donor is not infected.
- We will communicate test results that disqualify your son or daughter from future donation directly with your son or daughter. We maintain the confidentiality of information we obtain about a donor, and we will release a donor’s confidential information to his or her parents only with the donor’s consent.

### Whole Blood Donation

- Each whole blood donation uses a new, sterile needle to collect about a pint of blood from a vein in the donor’s arm.
- Most donors feel fine before and after donating blood, but some may have a lightheaded or dizzy feeling; an upset stomach; a black and blue mark, redness, or pain where the needle was; fainting or loss of consciousness and injury from related falls; or very rarely, nerve or artery damage.
- Young, first-time, and/or low-weight donors are more likely to experience reactions than other donors.
- Blood donation removes iron and may cause or aggravate iron-deficiency anemia.

### Apheresis (automated collection procedures, including two-unit (double) red cell collections)

- Apheresis is a type of blood donation in which we collect specific component(s) of the donor’s blood (platelets, plasma, or red cells). We place a needle in one or both of the donor’s arms and use a machine to draw blood and separate it into different parts. One or several of the blood components are removed, while the remainder and extra fluids are returned to the donor.
- Apheresis has the same risks as whole blood donation (see above). In addition, citrate is used during apheresis to prevent blood clotting, and citrate may cause chills, tingling sensations, feelings of anxiety, tremors, muscle cramping, numbness, nausea, vomiting, and/or convulsions. Donors may be given oral calcium supplements during the apheresis procedure to manage these symptoms. Very rarely, donors can experience allergic reactions (for example, skin rashes, hives, localized swelling, and/or flushing), air in the bloodstream, infection, or other complications.
- Repeated donation may result in iron depletion, anemia, fatigue, or changes in blood cell counts.

### Research

- We may use the information or left-over blood samples we collect from donors confidentially and anonymously for medical research, such as research on ways to increase the safety of the blood supply.
- By giving your son or daughter permission to donate blood, you are also consenting to the use of the donation and donor information for this type of research.