

Season of Giving: Red Cross urges blood donations

December 15, 2020



December may be the season of giving – but it’s typically a challenging time to collect enough blood donations. Add in a pandemic, and this year could be even tougher than usual, according to the American Red Cross.

The agency is urging those who are feeling well to give the gift of life by donating blood or platelets this holiday season.

The need for blood doesn’t stop for holidays. Between Thanksgiving and Christmas, more than 1 million blood transfusions will be given in the United States. Donations of all blood types are needed to ensure hospital shelves remain stocked to meet patient blood needs.

Make your appointment to give blood, platelets or plasma with the Red Cross by downloading the Red Cross Blood Donor App, visiting [RedCrossBlood.org](https://www.redcrossblood.org), calling 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or enabling the Blood Donor Skill on any Alexa Echo device.

To encourage donations this holiday season, those who come to donate blood, platelets or plasma with the Red Cross Dec. 18-Jan. 4 will receive a long-sleeved Red Cross T-shirt, while supplies last.

Important COVID-19 information for donors

As COVID-19 hospitalizations increase, hospital demand for convalescent plasma has also grown. COVID-19 convalescent plasma is a type of blood donation given by those who've recovered from this coronavirus. Their plasma contains antibodies that may help patients actively fighting the virus. Learn more about convalescent plasma and sign up to give at RedCrossBlood.org/Plasma4COVID.

The Red Cross is testing blood, platelet and plasma donations for COVID-19 antibodies. The test may indicate if the donor's immune system has produced antibodies to this coronavirus, regardless of whether an individual developed COVID-19 symptoms. Red Cross antibody tests will be helpful to identify individuals who have COVID-19 antibodies and may now help current coronavirus patients in need of convalescent plasma transfusions.

Convalescent plasma is a type of blood donation collected from COVID-19 survivors that have antibodies that may help patients who are actively fighting the virus.

COVID-19 antibody test results will be available within one to two weeks in the Red Cross Blood Donor App or donor portal at RedCrossBlood.org. A positive antibody test result does not confirm infection or immunity. The Red Cross is not testing donors to diagnose illness, referred to as a diagnostic test.

To protect the health and safety of Red Cross staff and donors, it is important that individuals who do not feel well or believe they may be ill with COVID-19 postpone donation.

Each Red Cross blood drive and donation center follows the highest standards of safety and infection control, and additional precautions – including temperature checks, social distancing and face coverings for donors and staff – have been implemented to help protect the health of all those in attendance. Donors are asked to schedule an appointment prior to arriving at the drive and are required to wear a face covering or mask while at the drive, in alignment with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention public guidance.

About blood donation

Simply download the American Red Cross Blood Donor App, visit RedCrossBlood.org, call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or enable the Blood Donor Skill on any Alexa Echo device to make an appointment or for more information. All blood types are needed to ensure a reliable supply for patients.

A blood donor card or driver's license or two other forms of identification are required at check-in. Individuals who are 17 years of age in most states (16 with parental consent where allowed by state law), weigh at least 110 pounds and are in generally good health may be eligible to donate blood. High school students and other donors 18 years of age and younger also have to meet certain height and weight requirements.

Blood and platelet donors can save time at their next donation by using RapidPass® to complete their pre-donation reading and health history questionnaire online, on the day of their donation, before arriving at the blood drive. To get started, follow the instructions at RedCrossBlood.org/RapidPass or use the Blood Donor App.

About the American Red Cross

The American Red Cross shelters, feeds and provides emotional support to victims of disasters; supplies about 40% of the nation's blood; teaches skills that save lives; provides international humanitarian aid; and supports military members and their families.

The Red Cross is a not-for-profit organization that depends on volunteers and the generosity of the American public to perform its mission. For more information, please visit redcross.org or cuzrojaamericana.org, or visit us on Twitter at [@RedCross](https://twitter.com/RedCross).