

Summer alert: blood and platelet donors needed now

June 6, 2024



American Red Cross

The American Red Cross critically needs blood and platelet donors now following a concerning decrease in donations as the country has experienced an increase in severe weather systems and historic travel. In fact, over the past month about 20,000 fewer blood donations were collected than needed to maintain the Red Cross-national blood supply.

According to the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), five of the busiest travel days ever happened this month and more record-breaking travel is expected this summer — a busy time when many regular donors may be unable to give. Additionally, as the U.S. approaches what AAA calls the “100 deadliest days” of summer for auto accidents, it is critical hospitals have lifesaving blood products on hand for all trauma and accident victims who count on transfusions when there is no time to waste. In some of the most-dire situations, medical teams may need to use hundreds of blood products to save a life.

“Emergencies take many forms – some arising in a hospital and others arising as relentless and devastating storms,” said Priscilla Fuentes, regional executive of the Red Cross Cascades Region. “Unfortunately, our community has been no stranger to emergencies these past few years, but when I witness communities come

together – at a blood drive or after a disaster – I see us growing stronger and becoming more resilient. Together, we can provide help and hope that is very much needed right now.”

Storm response efforts

The holiday weekend brought the busiest severe weather day of the year so far, with 26 reported tornadoes across 10 states.

With the most active year for tornadoes since 2017, hundreds of Red Cross disaster workers, including more than 20 from our region, are working around the clock with partners across multiple states to make sure people affected by this severe weather have a safe place to stay, food, relief supplies and emotional and spiritual support. Emergency shelters are open in some of the hardest hit areas. Red Cross disaster workers are helping assess the damage where it is safe to do so with preliminary reports indicating nearly 3,000 homes either destroyed or with major damage across the country.

The Red Cross is monitoring the weather and standing by to open additional shelters if needed. Should new communities be impacted, the organization will be on the ground providing help in the days and weeks to come.

How to help

Individuals are urged to help those facing emergencies – whether they need a lifesaving blood transfusion or shelter from the storm.

- Make a blood donation appointment by downloading the American Red Cross Blood Donor App, visiting RedCrossBlood.org, calling 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767). 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 good health may be eligible to donate blood. High school students and other donors 18 years old and younger must meet certain height and weight requirements.

- Go to RedCrossBlood.org for donation dates and locations.

- Help people affected by disasters like flooding and countless other crises by making a financial donation to Red Cross Disaster Relief today at redcross.org or via 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767). Your gift enables the Red Cross to prepare for, respond to and help people recover from disasters big and small.

- Put on a red vest and join us as a volunteer today to provide relief and hope when it matters most. Visit redcross.org/volunteertoday to sign up for local opportunities, like our Disaster Action Team, or Blood Donor Ambassador Program.

The Red Cross has teamed up with Tetris, creators of the iconic, best-selling video game, to celebrate their 40th anniversary and build the blood supply for patients in need. In commemoration, all who answer the call to help through June 9 will get an exclusive Tetris® + Red Cross T-shirt, while supplies last, plus be

automatically entered for a chance to win a trip for two to New York to meet Tetris creator, Alexey Pajitnov.
See RedCrossBlood.org/Tetris for details.