

# 50 Quick Facts

## Facts about blood needs

- Every two seconds someone in the U.S. needs blood.
- More than 38,000 blood donations are needed every day.
- A total of 30 million blood components are transfused each year in the U.S. (2006).
- The average red blood cell transfusion is approximately 3 pints.
- The blood type most often requested by hospitals is Type O.
- The blood used in an emergency is already on the shelves before the event occurs.
- Sickle cell disease affects more than 80,000 people in the U.S., 98 percent of whom are African American. Sickle cell patients can require frequent blood transfusions throughout their lives.
- More than 1 million new people are diagnosed with cancer each year. Many of them will need blood, sometimes daily, during their chemotherapy treatment.
- A single car accident victim can require as many as 100 pints of blood.

## Facts about the blood supply

- The number of blood donations collected in the U.S. in a year: 16 million (2006).
- The number of blood donors in the U.S. in a year: 9.5 million (2006).
- The number of patients who receive blood in the U.S. in a year: 5 million (2006).
- Share of the U.S. population eligible to give blood: Less than 38 percent.
- Blood cannot be manufactured – it can only come from generous donors.
- Type O-negative blood (red cells) can be transfused to patients of all blood types. It is always in great demand and often in short supply.
- Type AB-positive plasma can be transfused to patients of all other blood types. AB plasma is also usually in short supply.

## Facts about the blood donation process

- Donating blood is a safe process. A sterile needle is used only once for each donor and then discarded.
- Blood donation is a simple four-step process: registration, medical history and mini-physical, donation and refreshments.
- Every blood donor is given a mini-physical, checking the donor's temperature, blood pressure, pulse and hemoglobin to ensure it is safe for the donor to give blood.
- The actual blood donation typically takes less than 10-12 minutes. The entire process, from the time you arrive to the time you leave, takes about an hour and 15 min.
- The average adult has about 10 pints of blood in his body. Roughly 1 pint is given during a donation.
- A healthy donor may donate red blood cells every 56 days, or double red cells every 112 days.
- A healthy donor may donate platelets as few as 7 days apart, but a maximum of 24 times a year.
- All donated blood is tested for HIV, hepatitis B and C, syphilis and other infectious diseases before it can be released to hospitals.
- Information you give to the American Red Cross during the donation process is confidential. It may not be released without your permission except as directed by law.

## Facts about blood and its components

- Four types of transfusable products can be derived from blood: red cells, platelets, plasma and cryoprecipitate. Typically, two or three of these are produced from a pint of donated whole blood – hence each donation can help save up to three lives.



**American  
Red Cross**

## Facts about blood and its components

- Donors can give either whole blood or specific blood components only. The process of donating specific blood components – red cells, plasma or platelets – is called apheresis.
- One transfusion dose of platelets can be obtained through one apheresis donation of platelets or by combining the platelets derived from five whole blood donations.
- Most donated red blood cells must be used within 42 days of collection.
- Donated platelets must be used within five days of collection – new donations are constantly needed.
- Plasma and cryoprecipitate are stored in frozen state and can be used for up to one year after collection.
- Healthy bone marrow makes a constant supply of red cells, plasma and platelets. The body will replenish the elements given during a blood donation – some in a matter of hours and others in a matter of weeks.

## Facts about donors

- The number one reason donors say they give blood is because they “want to help others.”
- Two most common reasons cited by people who don’t give blood are: “Never thought about it” and “I don’t like needles.”
- One donation can help save the lives of up to three people.
- If you began donating blood at age 17 and donated every 56 days until you reached 76, you would have donated 48 gallons of blood, potentially helping save more than 1,000 lives!
- Half of Red Cross donors male, and half are female.
- The American Red Cross accepts blood donations only from volunteer donors.
- Among Red Cross donors in a given year, 19 percent donate occasionally, 31 percent are first-time donors, and 50 percent are regular, loyal donors.
- Only 7 percent of people in the U.S. have O-negative blood type. O-negative blood type donors are universal donors as their blood can be given to people of all blood types.

- Type O-negative blood is needed in emergencies before the patient’s blood type is known and with newborns who need blood.
- Forty-five percent of people in the U.S. have Type O (positive or negative) blood. This percentage is higher among Hispanics – 57 percent, and among African Americans – 51 percent.
- Only 3 percent of people in the U.S. have AB-positive blood type. AB-positive type blood donors are universal donors of plasma, which is often used in emergencies, for newborns and for patients requiring massive transfusions.

## Facts about American Red Cross Blood Services

- The American Red Cross blood program started in 1940, under the leadership of Dr. Charles Drew.
- The Red Cross supplies approximately 40 percent of the nation’s blood supply.
- The Red Cross provides blood for patients in nearly 3,000 hospitals across the U.S.
- The Red Cross makes blood available to any patient who needs it – patients are not required to find donors to replace the blood they use (a practice common in Europe and some U.S. blood banks) allowing the patient and their family to focus on recovery.
- Eighty percent of the blood donations given to the Red Cross are collected at mobile blood drives set up at community organizations, companies, high schools, colleges, places of worship or military installations. The remaining 20 percent are collected at fixed Red Cross donor centers.
- The Red Cross works with more than 50,000 blood drive sponsors each year to hold more than 200,000 blood drives, providing convenient locations for people to give blood.
- Red Cross Blood Services operates 36 blood regions and five national testing laboratories.

*Source: [www.redcrossblood.org](http://www.redcrossblood.org)*

**redcrossblood.org**  
**1-800-RED CROSS**