

Why should I donate?

The need for red blood cells, platelets, and plasma affects us all. We all know someone who has needed blood or blood products at some point in our life. Many children in the hospital require fresh blood or special rare types of red blood cells. Red blood cells, platelets, and plasma are in constant demand for victims of accidents, cancer treatments, blood diseases, and many types of surgery.

Who may donate?

Anyone in good health between the ages of 17 and 70 and weighs more than 110 pounds may donate. A list of our medical criteria for donation are listed at: ChildrensNational.org/DonateBlood.

How long does the donation take?

The entire blood donation process takes approximately 30 to 45 minutes, while a platelet donation takes approximately one to two hours.

How long will it take to replenish my blood?

Your body replaces blood volume or plasma, the liquid portion of blood, within 24 hours. Red blood cells need approximately four to eight weeks for complete replacement.

Platelets take approximately three to four days to replenish.



Children's National™

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Children's National™

Edward J. Miller, Sr.

Blood Donor Center
Save a life Give Blood

Make an Appointment

ChildrensNational.org/DonateBlood

The Edward J. Miller, Sr., Blood Donor Center was established in 1990 to support the growing need for blood and blood products at Children's National. The Blood Donor Center team collects approximately 2,800 whole blood donations and 750 apheresis platelet donations per year.

As the number of patients treated at Children's National continues to grow, the need for blood donations becomes greater than ever.



Frequently Asked Questions

What will happen first?

Some basic information and your photo identification are required. Your medical history also will be taken and you will be given a mini-physical to determine eligibility.

Is there anything special I need to do before my donation?

Please eat a light, low-fat meal and drink plenty of fluids before your donation.

If you are donating platelets, please do not take any products containing aspirin and/or non steroid anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), such as Ibuprofen, for at least 72 hours before your scheduled appointment. You may take Tylenol if needed.

How will I feel after the donation?

After your donation, you will relax and have a snack. Donors who have had a light, low-fat meal and plenty of fluids before donating are usually fine. After donating, remember to drink extra fluids for the next 24 hours. Avoid strenuous activities and exercising until the next day.

How often can I donate?

You can donate red blood cells every 56 days, platelets every 14 days, and plasma every 28 days. Please contact the Blood Donor Center at 202-476-KIDS (5437) or ChildrensNational.org/DonateBlood to make an appointment.

Types of Donations

Whole blood donations: Red blood cells carry vital oxygen to your body's tissues and organs. Whole blood is collected through a single-use, sterile needle. The collection usually takes between five and 10 minutes. After the collection, your whole blood donation will be separated into red blood cells and plasma.

Platelet donations: Platelets are vital to your body ability to clot and are used to help treat many diseases. Platelets are collected using a sterile, single-use needle and a disposable apheresis kit. Blood is drawn into an apheresis machine that separates into components. The platelets are collected in a separate bag with plasma and the blood is returned to you. This process is repeated until the amount of platelets needed have been collected. The collection process takes 45 minutes to two hours. During this time, you may read or watch TV. We may also collect plasma and/or red blood cells depending on your blood counts.

Directed donations:

When families want to recruit specific donors for their child, a directed donation can be made. The child's physician or the Blood Donor Center can provide the family with more information on this process.



Autologous donations:

Prior to surgery, some children can give blood to themselves; this is called an autologous blood donation. The child must be healthy, at least 10 years old, weigh more than 50 pounds, and can not be anemic.

Transfusion Buddy Program

Children who are transfused chronically, such as sickle cell disease patients, tend to develop antibodies. The Transfusion Buddy program provides patients with blood from donors whose red cell antigens closely match their own. This may reduce the amount of antibodies the patients form, and make finding compatible blood for their future transfusions easier. Please contact the Blood Donor Center if you are interested in becoming a Transfusion Buddy.