

Donate platelets. The need is real.

Platelets are a special gift that each of us holds. By sharing them, you can give someone another chance at life.

Blood is made up of four components – red cells, white cells, platelets and plasma. Each component plays a specific role in the body and can benefit patients in a different way.



What are platelets?

Platelets are cells in the blood that help form clots and control bleeding.

Why are platelet donations needed?

Platelets are routinely needed to support patient surgeries, cancer patients, blood disorders and organ transplants. After donation, platelets have a life span of only five days. To ensure an adequate supply of platelets for patients, more donors are needed.

How long does it take?

The entire process may take two to three hours to ensure a full donation. This is because it takes time to separate and collect the platelets from the other blood components. Donors are encouraged to relax during the donation – videos, TV and wireless internet are available in some locations. Platelets may be donated every seven days, up to 24 times a year.

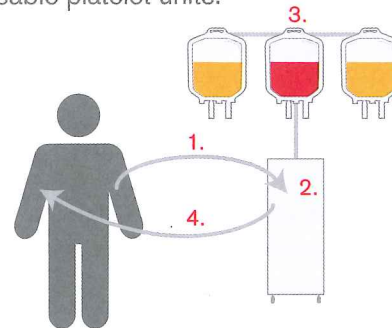
The time is now.

What is the donation process?

It is very similar to donating blood, but platelet donation uses an automated machine. You'll sit in a donation chair and have a blanket to keep you warm – sometimes donors experience a tingling sensation or chills. Here is what happens during the donation:

1. A relatively small amount of blood is drawn from a donor's arm and goes into a blood cell separator.
2. This blood is rapidly spun, which forces the platelet cells to the bottom.
3. These cells then go into a sterile, single-use plastic bag.
4. Meanwhile, the rest of the blood – the plasma, red cells and white cells – is returned to the donor.*

This cycle is repeated several times. A single donation of platelets often constitutes several transfusable platelet units.



*Depending on the donor, one or two arms may be used in this process.

How do I prepare for my donation?

You cannot take aspirin or medications containing aspirin within two full calendar days prior to your platelet donation (three full calendar days in the state of New York). You should consume plenty of calcium-rich foods and beverages for a few days prior to your donation. Also it's important to get a good night's rest before you donate.

You can help.

We invite you to try a new way to help save lives.

Please call **1-800-RED CROSS** or visit **redcrossblood.org** for more information or to schedule your appointment today!

Platelet Donation 101

Timing is Everything

Platelet donations are needed every day, but the need is greater on certain days due to hospital schedules and the time it takes to prepare platelets for transfusion. Please ask Red Cross staff about the current priority donation days.



Donors Needed

The American Red Cross is recruiting new platelet donors to help ensure cancer patients have the platelets they depend upon during treatment. Start giving platelets today to help kick cancer.

Your Commitment

When you schedule an appointment to donate platelets, we are reserving a chair just for you and hospital patients in need are counting on your donation. If you are unable to make your appointment, please notify us at least 24 hours in advance.

Saving Lives

Check out how your donation makes an impact by visiting our website at **redcrossblood.org**.

