

About Platelet Donations

Instead of donating a pint of whole blood, you can now donate a particular component (e.g. platelets, plasma or red blood cells) or a combination of components that is most needed by patients who match your blood type.

Why do patients need platelets?

Platelets are very fragile, short lived blood cells that are essential for normal blood clotting. They must be transfused within 5 days of donation which makes it necessary for us to provide hospitals with a fresh supply of platelets daily.

Platelets are often used to treat:

- Cancer patients
- Accident victims
- Patients with blood disorders
- Bone marrow transplant patients

What's it like to donate platelets?

A platelet donation feels much the same as a whole blood donation. A small amount of blood is taken from your arm using a new, sterile, single use needle. The blood then literally 'takes a spin' in a centrifuge to separate your platelets from other blood components. The platelets are collected in a separate bag and the remainder of your blood is returned to you. This cycle is repeated several times to generate the required volume of platelets.

The eligibility guidelines to donate platelets are the same as for whole blood except for platelet donations you are asked to refrain from aspirin or products containing aspirin for 48 hours prior to donation.

Although your actual platelet donation will take approximately 75 minutes, please allow a total of two hours from registration through refreshments.

Can't you take platelets from my whole blood donation?

Yes. Platelets can be taken from a whole blood donation but when you make a platelet donation using automated technology you donate 6 to 10 times the amount of platelets than can be obtained from a whole blood donation. A patient needing platelets will require that amount for one treatment. So, instead of six to ten blood donors, it takes just one platelet donor to provide a patient with one treatment of platelets.

Is it safe to donate platelets?

At all times during the platelet collection process your blood remains inside a sterile tubing system and is never in contact with the equipment used for your platelet donation. All tubing, bags and the needle used to collect your platelets are new, sterile and used only once for you. After use, the entire disposable kit is discarded.

You can donate platelets along with plasma.

As part of your platelet donation we can also collect plasma. Plasma is composed of about 92% water, 7% vital proteins such as albumin, gamma globulin, anti-hemophilic factor and other clotting factors, and 1% mineral salts, sugars, fats, hormones and vitamins. Plasma is needed to maintain a person's blood pressure and assists in clotting. Therefore, it is vital in the treatment of burn patients, patients in shock and bleeding disorders.

How do I schedule an appointment to donate platelets?

Visit www.savealifenow.org/plt
or call us at **1-877-468-6844**.