

WHEREVER YOU ARE

THE DONOR GUIDE

*« Blood donation is a fulfilling experience
that makes you feel useful in a tangible way »*

CROIX-ROUGE
de Belgique



EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT **BLOOD**, **PLASMA** AND **PLATELETS** DONATION

1. WHY GIVE BLOOD ?	3
2. WHAT IS BLOOD?	5
3. THE BLOOD GROUPS	7
4. HOW DO I GIVE BLOOD?	9
5. THE LABORATORY ANALYSES	11
6. WHO CAN GIVE BLOOD?	12
7. BLOOD DONATION	17
8. PLASMA AND PLATELETS DONATION	19
• PLASMA DONATION	20
• PLATELETS DONATION	21
9. GIVING BLOOD SAFELY	23
10. POST DONATION INFORMATION	26
11. PERSONAL DATA AND PRIVACY	27
12. CONFIDENTIAL MEDICAL QUESTIONNAIRE AND INFORMED CONSENT	29

1. WHY GIVE BLOOD?

- ... because today, nothing else can replace blood.
- ... because giving blood is an act of solidarity, altruism and generosity that makes you feel useful in a practical way!
- ... because Belgium needs almost 500 000 bags a year to meet the needs.
- ... because fewer than 1 in every 10 people give blood, although 1 in person out of 7 will need it one day.

Every day, victims of illness and accidents need blood transfusions. This means that we need donors throughout the year.

SO WHY NOT ALSO BECOME A REGULAR DONOR!

Giving blood will allow you to find out your blood group, and biological analyses will be performed each time you donate.

Please note!

You should never give blood simply to have an AIDS test. If you want to be screened, see your doctor or family planning centre. A free test will be performed. A list of screening centres is available from our donation venues.

DID YOU KNOW ...

- That a **cancer** patient who undergoes chemotherapy often needs to be transfused **several times a week**?
- That a transfusion is sometimes necessary if a woman loses a lot of blood during **childbirth**?
- that several bags are necessary during **heart and brain surgery**, **during transplants** or to care for **some new-born babies**?

**BY GIVING YOUR BLOOD, PLASMA OR PLATELETS,
YOU CAN HELP PATIENTS!**



2. WHAT IS BLOOD?

Blood is a liquid that carries various vital substances, such as oxygen, proteins, vitamins, etc., through the body. On average, 5 litres of blood circulate in the human body but this volume varies depending on the gender, height and weight of each individual.

Blood has the following composition:

- 45% cells (red blood cells, white blood cells and platelets).
- 55% plasma (liquid part).

RED BLOOD CELLS contain haemoglobin, which gives blood its red colour and allows oxygen to be carried to the organs and tissues. Iron is necessary for the proper functioning of the red blood cells. That is why iron is sometimes given to donors after they have given blood.

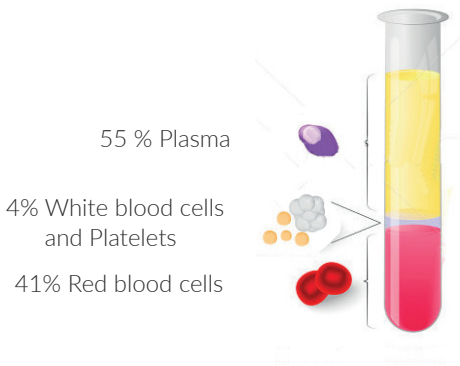
The job of **THE WHITE BLOOD CELLS** is to defend the body against infections and foreign cells. There are several types of white blood cells: granulocytes, lymphocytes and monocytes. Lymphocytes produce antibodies.

PLATELETS play a role in the blood clotting process. In the event of injury, they form a clot that makes it possible to stop the bleeding.

PLASMA is the liquid part of the blood in which the red blood cells, white blood cells and platelets swim.

Plasma contains proteins that are essential for the body, such as:

- > immunoglobulins (or antibodies).
- > Clotting factors.
- > Albumin.



3. THE BLOOD GROUPS

Red blood cells have many molecules on their surface, which vary from one individual to another. These molecules can be grouped into different systems, the best known are the ABO and Rh systems.

The ABO system defines the blood group of each individual. The Rh system determines if a donor is RhD positive or RhD negative. Other, lesser known systems define the subgroups of donors.

Each donor therefore belongs to one of these blood groups:

- > O+ or O-
- > A+ or A-
- > B+ or B-
- > AB+ or AB-

During a transfusion, the donor's blood group must be identical to or at least compatible with that of the recipient.



Donors who belong to the blood group O negative are particularly encouraged to give blood as their red blood cells are used in cases of emergency.

We are looking for donors belonging to groups A and O in order to respond to the platelets needs.

We are looking for donors of all blood groups in order to respond to the plasma needs.

It is important to have diversified blood supplies in order to be able to treat all patients, regardless of their blood group and blood subgroup. As the frequency of the blood groups/subgroups is not the same in all populations, we need donors from all parts of the world.



4. HOW DO I GIVE BLOOD?

Before giving blood

- It is recommended that you eat a light meal.
- Come along to one of our permanent donor centres or one of our temporary mobile centres, bringing an official form of identification with a photograph.
- When you arrive, drink 2 to 3 glasses of water to stay well hydrated during your donation.
- You are invited to fill in and sign a medical questionnaire and informed consent.

The medical interview

- Makes it possible to assess your current state of health and your medical and surgical history.
- Assesses if you have had a risk behaviour and/or were exposed to a risk situation.

The medical interview is strictly confidential, therefore you cannot be accompanied by a third party.

After the medical interview, the examiner will determine the volume of blood to be collected. In some cases, it is possible that you will be advised against giving blood to protect your health or that of the recipient. Do not hesitate to ask for further explanations if you do not understand the reason for this decision.

IRON...

During the medical interview, the doctor may sometimes ask you to take iron tablets. In this case, it is important to respect the recommendation as well as the diet tips included in our brochure “Le fer ...Parlons-en”.

Blood collection

- Use of sterile and disposable equipment. There is therefore no risk of being infected when giving blood.
- Giving blood is not more painful than a simple blood test.
- Samples are collected to perform laboratory analyses regulated by law.
- The collection itself does not take more than 12 minutes.

After the blood donation

You are invited to take refreshments and to rest. Take the opportunity to recover for a few minutes!



5. THE LABORATORY ANALYSES

Analyses are carried out on samples collected during the donation to determine your blood type and detect any abnormalities that could reveal a risk to your health or that of the recipient.

The analyses relate to:

- The blood group.
- Haemoglobin to search for anaemia.
- The number of blood cells (red blood cells, white blood cells and platelets).
- The blood-borne diseases:
 - Hepatitis B and C.
 - HIV (AIDS).
 - Syphilis.
 - Malaria (in some cases, after a stay in a tropical country at risk of malaria).
 - Chagas disease (after a trip to Latin America).

You can be a carrier of a blood borne disease and be unaware of it. It is therefore possible that, following the analyses, the blood you donated is not used. In this case, you cannot donate blood, either temporarily or permanently. If your results are outside the reference values, you will be notified by our laboratory.

You can request a copy of your test results, which will be sent by mail. After your second blood donation, we will send you a donor card stating your blood type. On no account may we pass on the results to a third party.

6. WHO CAN GIVE BLOOD?

A blood donation is a responsible, voluntary, selfless act which is not remunerated. You can give blood if you:

- > Are in good health.
- > Weigh at least 50 kg (NB: for women shorter than 1m56 the minimum threshold is raised above 50kg: please ask the doctor or the nurse).
- > are not at risk of transmitting diseases through blood.
- > Are at least 18 years of age. As from the age of 66, all types of donation are allowed provided the same type of donation took place within the previous 3 years.

The first blood or plasma donation must take place before the 66th birthday.

The first platelet donation must take place before the 61st birthday.

For safety reasons, a confidential medical interview is carried out before each donation.



CAN I BE INFECTED BY GIVING BLOOD?

No! The equipment used to collect blood is sterile and disposable. It is never reused.



CAN I BE INFECTED WHEN RECEIVING BLOOD?

The risk of infecting a recipient is extremely low. This can occur when a person who is infected donates blood during the 'window period' (the period during which our laboratory tests do not yet detect the infectious agent responsible for the disease, although it is present in the body).

Minimization of the risk involves:

- Informing the donor of high-risk behaviour and situations that can cause contamination.
- Encouraging the self-exclusion of donors with a high-risk behaviour.
- Inviting the donor to respect the resulting recommendations.
- Performing a medical interview before each donation.
- Performing screening tests on each donation (hepatitis B and C, Syphilis and HIV (AIDS)).
- Improving post-donation information (see page 26).

These safety measures are the result of a real evolution in the field of transfusion. Technological developments in the preparation of platelets and plasma and its derivatives further reduce this risk.

THEREFORE, DO NOT GIVE BLOOD IF...

- You have ever used intravenous or intramuscular hard drugs, doping products or anabolic steroids that were not prescribed by a doctor.
- Have ever had a positive test for HIV (AIDS), hepatitis B or C, syphilis or HTLV.

WAIT 12 MONTHS BEFORE GIVING BLOOD...

- After you have had sexual contact in exchange for money, goods or services^(*).
- After you have had more than one sexual partner during the same period of time (group sex, more than one regular partner...)^(*).
- For men: after you have had sexual contact with a man^(*).

WAIT 12 MONTHS AFTER HAVING HAD SEXUAL CONTACT WITH A PARTNER WHO, TO THE BEST OF YOUR KNOWLEDGE:

- Has ever used intravenous or intramuscular hard drugs^(*).
- Has had sexual contact in exchange for money, goods or services^(*).
- Has had more than one sexual partner during the same period of time (group sex, more than one regular partner...)^(*).
- Is not a Western Europe native and had been living in Belgium for less than one year^(*).
- Has had a positive test for HIV (AIDS), hepatitis B, hepatitis C or HTLV^(*).
- For women: if your sexual partner is a man and he has had sexual contact with a man^(*).

NB: if your partner or a member of your household is a carrier of the hepatitis B virus, you are allowed to give blood without delay provided you are immune to the virus. Please check with the doctor or nurse. If your partner has syphilis, you are allowed to give blood 4 months after his / her being cured. "

(*): with or without a condom

WAIT 6 MONTHS BEFORE GIVING BLOOD ...

- After childbirth, abortion or miscarriage.
- After travelling to tropical regions.

HOWEVER plasma donation is allowed 4 weeks after your return from some tropical regions. Please check with the doctor or the nurse.

WAIT 4 MONTHS BEFORE GIVING BLOOD...

- After a tattoo, a piercing or permanent make-up.
- After a treatment with mesotherapy gun or acupuncture treatment if the needles are not individual or disposable.
- After surgery or endoscopy (gastroscopy, colonoscopy, rhinoscopy, arthroscopy, etc.).
- After contact with human blood by means of injection, bite, lesion or splashing.
- After having received blood.
- After having used (sniffed) intranasal drugs.
- After having had sexual contact with a new partner, even an occasional one.^(*)

(*) with or without a condom





FURTHERMORE...

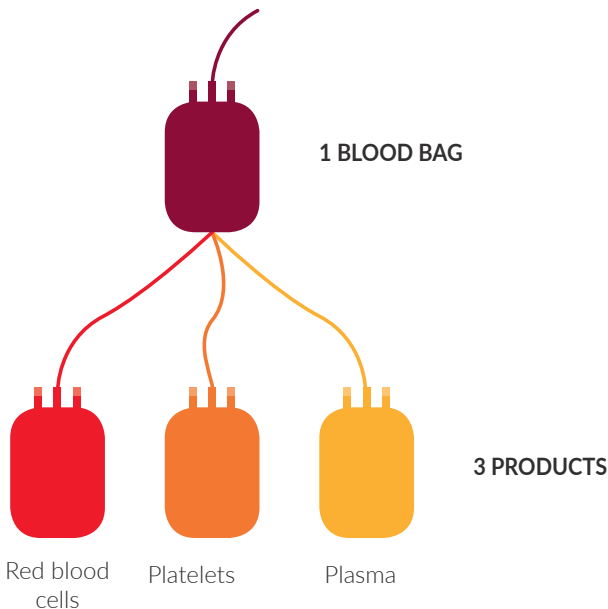
- If you have had a fever: wait for 2 weeks after recovery.
- If you have been to the dentist: wait for 1 week after tooth extraction or root canal treatment, dental reconstruction or implant, and 24 hours for other treatments.

If taking medication, after a stay outside Belgium, or if in doubt:
contact us on 0800 92 245 (free call).

Transfusion safety is closely linked to compliance with the guidelines that we follow rigorously. They prevent the bloodborne transmission of HIV (AIDS) and other infectious diseases.

7. BLOOD DONATION

- > Collecting the blood lasts no more than 12 minutes but foresee 45 minutes from your arrival at the collection venue until your departure.
- > In Belgium you can give blood up to a maximum of 4 times in 365 days, respecting a minimum of 2 months between 2 donations.
- > We collect between 430 and 470 ml of blood.
- > The blood bag will then be separated into 3 different products: packed red cells, a platelets concentrate and plasma.



- Red blood cells are needed to treat bleeding and severe anaemia. They can be kept for 42 days at a temperature of between 2 and 6°C.



- Plasma contains essential proteins lacking in many patients. Some drugs can only be manufactured from human plasma:
 - For instance, immunoglobulines that are crucial for patients suffering from immune deficiencies
 - Albumine solutions, clotting factors,...
- As the volume of platelets obtained from one blood bag is very small, they are mixed with other platelets collected from 5 other donors to get a pool of platelets.

Platelets are required to treat haemorrhages, but also in case of stem cell transplants, certain cancers or blood diseases.

Their conservation is limited to 5 days at a temperature of between 20 and 24°C with constant stirring. Platelets are particularly fragile.

8. PLASMA AND PLATELETS DONATION

As blood donation does not cover the needs of all patients, you can also donate plasma or platelets by apheresis.

Apheresis is a special technique that makes it possible to sort and select blood components: only those needed are taken. The advantage is that a greater amount of the component to be transfused can be obtained. This technique requires special equipment. It is therefore only performed in our fixed collection venues and by appointment.

These collections are not more painful than a blood donation. However, they do take a little longer.



PLASMA DONATION

Plasma is mostly made from water (90%) and proteins essential for the body.

It can be obtained from a blood bag, or by apheresis. All donors can donate plasma.

Once collected, plasma undergoes rapid freezing to ensure its conservation. It can thus be stored at a temperature of -25°C .

It is then used as such or separated into various components (immunoglobulins, albumin, clotting factors, etc.).

Unlike blood and platelets donations, plasma donation is allowed as from 4 weeks after the return from some tropical areas.

Please check with the doctor or the nurse.

- Plasmapheresis: 45 minutes (foresee 1h15 from your arrival at the collection venue until your departure).
- You can give plasma every 2 weeks but no more than 23 times in 365 days.
- Interested? Contact a collection centre to make an appointment.

WWW.DONNEURDESANG.BE
0800 92 245 - info@croix-rouge.be

PLATELETS DONATION

Platelets are small cells produced by the bone marrow, which play an important role in the clotting process. They clump together to close the wounds and help stop the bleeding.

Platelets are useful in transplant or cancer patients or those suffering from cancer or blood diseases. They are often transfused after chemotherapy, as these treatments are toxic to cells derived from the marrow.

Platelets can be obtained from a blood bag, or by apheresis in group O or A donors. A single donation of platelets by apheresis makes it possible to transfuse 1 or 2 adults and up to 3 children!

Once collected, the platelets can be stored at a temperature of 20-24°C, with constant stirring. Their lifetime does not exceed 5 days, which is why it is not possible to build up large stocks. However, it is essential to have enough collections every day.

Interested? Get in touch with a collection venue to make an appointment.

WWW.DONNEURDESANG.BE
0800 92 245 - info@croix-rouge.be

IN SHORT...

BLOOD DONATION

The collection itself takes 12 minutes, but foresee 45 minutes from your arrival at the collection venue until your departure:

- > All blood groups.
- > Maximum 4 donations in 365 days.
- > Minimum 2 months between 2 donations.

PLATELETS DONATION

The collection itself takes 1h30, but foresee 2 hours from your arrival at the collection venue until your departure:

- > Only group O and A donors.
- > Always on appointment and according to need.
- > Preferably 1 month between 2 donations.

PLASMA DONATION

The collection itself takes 45 minutes, but foresee 1h15 from your arrival at the collection venue until your departure:

- > All donors.
- > Minimum 2 weeks between 2 donations.

9. GIVING BLOOD SAFELY

BEFORE YOUR DONATION

Light meal
recommended



Drink 2 or 3
glasses of water



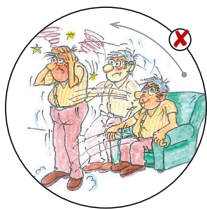
DURING YOUR DONATION

The muscular pressure applied prevents discomfort

Contract the
muscles at
regular intervals



Do not get up too
suddenly



AFTER YOUR DONATION



Rest, eat and drink



Do not stay standing
for too long



Avoid excessive
efforts

After the donation, your body has to make new red blood cells, plasma and platelets in order to replace your donation.

To accelerate the recovery, we encourage you to drink plenty of water, not only after the donation but also during the following hours... this is particularly important in hot weather.

Furthermore, it is strongly **recommended to avoid**:

- ✘ Alcoholic beverages,
- ✘ Driving or cycling for long periods,
- ✘ Standing for long periods,
- ✘ Going swimming, scuba diving or practising violent sports,
- ✘ Saunas, hammams and sunbeds,
- ✘ Working in a position of responsibility (firemen, ambulance drivers, coach and train drivers, etc.),
- ✘ Exposing yourself to the risk of falling (work on a roof, ladder, etc.),
- ✘ Performing work with potentially dangerous equipment (grinder, chainsaw, etc.),
- ✘ Overexerting the arm from which the blood was drawn (e.g. lifting weights, tennis, etc.).

Donating blood does not present any particular risk provided that all the conditions are duly respected, and that preventive measures (light meal, 2-3 glasses of water before donation and muscle pressure applied during the donation) are properly adopted. However, there is always the possibility that an incident may occur during or after donation.



Incidents linked to the venepuncture itself:

- Local discomfort.
- Persistent pain during or after the donation.
- Local swelling.
- Bruising.
- Tingling.
- Blood drawn accidentally from an artery.

Other rare signs may appear in some donors, such as:

- A sense of uneasiness or temporary faintness.
- Low blood pressure.
- A tendency to faint or even lose consciousness.
- A persistent discomfort some time after the donation.
- Tetany.

If feeling weak after a donation, it is recommended that you lie down and, if possible, raise your legs and rest a while.

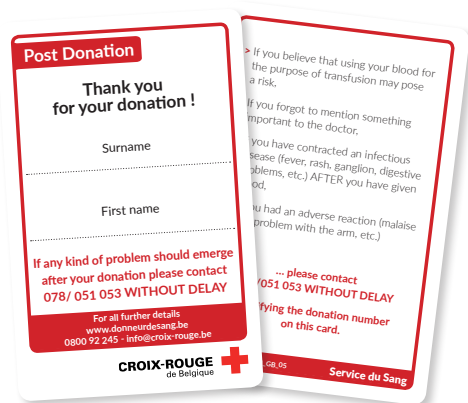
Finally, if the examiner recommended you to take iron tablets, remember to take the specified number of tablets. Ask for our brochure “Le fer... parlons-en”.

10. POST DONATION INFORMATION

If after donating blood, plasma or platelets :

- You believe that it would be risky to transfuse your blood.
- You forgot to mention an important piece of information to the doctor.
- You develop an infectious disease (fever, skin rash, lymph nodes, digestive disorders ...).
- You have a reaction (discomfort or problem with your arm, etc.).

... dial 078 051 053 IMMEDIATELY, and give the donation number that appears on the post donation card.



The post-donation card that you will receive after your first donation aims to increase the safety of blood transfusion.

Please keep it safe and present your card at each of your visit!

11. PERSONAL DATA AND PRIVACY

When giving blood, you are asked to answer a number of questions regarding your health, lifestyle and any foreign travel you have undertaken. These questions enable us to assess whether or not it is safe for you to give blood, and for others to receive it.

Additional personal information (address, e-mail, telephone number) is also collected and recorded for administrative purposes so that we can invite you to donate again, send test results if needed, notify you of upcoming events to promote blood donation, and to share information about giving blood.

This personal information will be kept strictly confidential and will not be used for any other purpose. Moreover, your personal medical data are protected under medical confidentiality legislation.

In accordance with the Belgian law, the medical questionnaires, which you complete prior to giving blood, will be retained for 15 years.



Data enabling donated blood and any derived products to be identified to ensure full traceability will be retained for a minimum of 30 years and a maximum of 40 years.

The responsible for the treatment of the data is the Service du Sang of the Croix-Rouge de Belgique (rue du Fond du Maréchal 8 - 5020 Suarlée).

In compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation, you have the right to access these data, to request to have them corrected and to have them communicated to an authorised individual (portability) at any time.

You can submit a request relating to your personal data by completing the relevant form available at <https://www.croix-rouge.be> under the "Vie Privée" ("Privacy") section.



12. CONFIDENTIAL MEDICAL QUESTIONNAIRE AND INFORMED CONSENT

With every blood donation, after you have completed the confidential medical questionnaire, you will be asked to sign an informed consent form.

Why ?

Because, after the blood donation process has been explained to you in full (how the process works, the tests carried out, the benefits and risks for the receivers, the risks for the donor, how we process your personal data, etc.) and you have received answers to your questions :

- You formally consent to donate blood, by answering the questions below and signing.
- You confirm that the details you have supplied are truthful.
- You give or decline consent for one or more components or samples of your blood to possibly be used in medical or scientific research.

You have the right to decide not to proceed with the donation before the process begins, and to stop the process at any time without feeling embarrassed or ashamed.

AND IF YOU WANT TO DO EVEN MORE...

Congratulations !

Thanks to your gesture, you enter into the community of blood donors! By becoming not only a donor, but also a **regular** donor, you actively participate in this chain of solidarity that helps save lives every day. Talk about blood donation around you.

YOU ARE OUR BEST AMBASSADOR!

Also, ask our teams about the most appropriate donations based on your blood type and the evolution of our stocks.

If you want to organise a collection in your school or in your company, contact 0800 92 245 or send an email to info@croix-rouge.be.

Join our facebook page “Sang pour Sang Donneur” and share our posts..

SANG POUR SANG DONNEUR



PATIENTS NEED YOU! THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!



WWW.DONNEURDESANG.BE
info@croix-rouge.be - ☎0800 92 245

CROIX-ROUGE
de Belgique



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Chaussée de Binche 101
7000 Mons - 065 22 10 30

Bruxelles site

Route de Lennik 808
1070 Bruxelles - 02 526 92 69

Liège site

Rue Dos Fanchon 41
4020 Liège - 04 341 69 11

Nationale 4 site

Rue du Fond du Maréchal 8
5020 Suarlée - 081 56 41 52