American Red Cross

The following are eligibility questions commonly asked by people who are considering blood donation. Additional eligibility criteria are further explained in the eligibility section of redcrossblood.org, and some state laws may apply. A person with an eligibility question should contact the American Red Cross Donor and Client Support Center at 1-866-236-3276. It is important to remember that these are examples and final donor suitability is determined at the collection site on the day of donation using standards in place at that time.

AGE: A person must be at least 17 years of age (or 16 where state law permits); parental consent requirements vary by state but is always required of 16 year old donors. There is no upper age limit for donation; however, some states may require medical approval for donors over age 75. Call the Donor and Client Support Center at 1-866-236-3276 for state-specific age information or visit redcrossblood.org and enter your zip code to print the parental consent form, if required.

ALLERGY: A person may donate as long as he or she feels well, has no fever, and has no problems breathing.

ASTHMA: A person may donate as long as he or she is not having difficulty breathing at the time of donation and otherwise feels well. Medications for asthma do not disqualify a person from donating.

BLOOD PRESSURE: A person's blood pressure must be between 80/50 and 180/100 at the time of donation. High blood pressure medications are acceptable for donation.

BLOOD TRANSFUSION: A person who has received a blood transfusion from a person in the U.S. must wait 12 months to be eligible to donate. A person is not eligible to donate if he/she received a blood transfusion since 1980 in the United Kingdom or France.

CANCER: A person with a history of leukemia, lymphoma or Hodgkin's disease and other cancers of the blood are not eligible to donate. A person with other forms of cancer may be eligible if twelve months have passed since the last treatment, with no recurrences or active disease. A person with low risk cancer (e.g., squamous or basal cell skin cancers) that has been completely removed is eligible. A person with a precancerous condition of the uterine cervix, cervical carcinoma in-situ that has been treated successfully may be eligible.

COLD, FLU, SORE THROAT: A person with a fever, productive cough, or other acute cold symptoms should wait until he/she feels well enough to donate. A person who has completed antibiotic treatment for and has recovered from sinus, throat, or lung infection may donate. Mild nasal congestion, a dry cough, or allergies are acceptable.

DENTAL PROCEDURES AND ORAL SURGERY: There is no waiting period after fillings, cleanings, root canals, scalings, or extractions, if no infection is present. A person should wait until finishing antibiotics for a dental infection and wait 3 days after oral surgery.

DIABETES: A diabetic person is eligible to donate if the disease is well controlled by diet, non-bovine insulin or oral medications. A diabetic person who received bovine insulin manufactured in the United Kingdom is permanently ineligible to donate.

© The American National Red Cross 2013

American Red Cross

DONATION INTERVALS: A whole blood donor may donate every 56 days. A double red-cell donor may donate every 112 days. A platelet donor may donate as often as every 7 days, up to a maximum of 24 times a year. A person may donate any combination of these procedures, but the donation interval will vary.

HEART DISEASE: In general, a person is eligible if he/she has been medically evaluated and treated, has no current (within the last six months) heart-related symptoms such as chest pain, and has no limitations or restrictions on activities of daily living. A person must wait at least six months following an episode of angina, congestive heart failure, cardiomyopathy, heart attack, or surgery (coronary artery bypass graft, angioplasty, stent placement). A donor with a pacemaker may donate as long as the pulse rate is between 50 and 100 beats per minute at the time of donation.

HEPATITIS: A person who has had unexplained jaundice or who, since age 11, has had infectious hepatitis caused by a virus, including hepatitis with cytomegalovirus (CMV), hepatitis with Epstein-Barr virus (EBV) associated with infectious mononucleosis is not eligible to donate. A person who has tested positive for hepatitis B or hepatitis C at any age is not eligible, even if the person was never sick or jaundiced from the infection. A person who has had jaundice or hepatitis caused by something other than a viral infection is eligible.

IMMUNIZATION, VACCINATION: There is no deferral period for these vaccinations: routine flu; pneumonia; human papilloma virus (HPV); meningococcal meningitis; tetanus; diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus (DPT).

A person must wait two weeks after immunization for red measles (rubeola), mumps, polio (by mouth) and yellow fever.

A person must wait 21 days after immunization for hepatitis B (as long as there was no exposure to hepatitis).

A person must wait 4 weeks after immunization for German measles (rubella); measles, mumps and rubella (MMR); chicken pox; and shingles.

Other vaccinations (e.g., smallpox) require individual assessment by a Red Cross staff member.

MEDICATIONS: In general, most medications are acceptable, including over-the-counter oral homeopathic medications, herbal remedies and nutritional supplements. Call the Donor and Client Support Center at 1-866-236-3276 for the designated waiting periods following the last dose of the following medications: Accutane, Absorica, Amnesteem, Claravis, Myorisan, Sotret, or Zenatane (isoretinoin); Proscar or Propecia (finasteride); Avodart or Jalyn (dutasteride); Coumadin (warfarin), heparin, Pradaxa (dabigatran), Lovenox (enoxaparin sodium), Xarelto (rivaroxaban), or other prescription blood thinners; hepatitis B immune globulin; human pituitary derived growth hormone; Soriatane (acitretin); Tegison (etretinate) or aspirin, Feldene (piroxicam); Effient (prasugrel) Plavix (clopidogrel), or Ticlid (ticlopidine).

PIERCING (ear, body): A person may be eligible if the instrument used for the piercing was sterile or single-use. If there is any question, a person must wait 12 months.

PREGNANCY: A pregnant woman is not eligible to donate. A woman may donate six weeks after the end of pregnancy, and a nursing mother is eligible to donate.

© The American National Red Cross 2013

American Red Cross

SURGERY: A person may donate if he/she has returned to normal activity, feels well, and the underlying illness is not a disqualifying factor. A person with a sutured minor cut and/or laceration may donate if there is no infection.

TATTOO: A person may donate if the tattoo was applied at a state-regulated facility that uses sterile needles and single-use ink. A person must wait 12 months after having a tattoo applied in a facility that is not state-regulated, regardless whether sterile ink and needles were used. For specific states that are regulated, call the Donor and Client Support Center at 1-866-236-3276.

TRAVEL OUTSIDE THE U.S.: Travel restrictions vary widely, and the following are more common restrictions. For specific areas of travel, call the Donor and Client Support Center at 1-866-236-3276.

A person may donate who has traveled to a non-risk area of a malarial risk country and is free of unexplained symptoms suggestive of malaria.

A person must wait twelve months after travel to a malarial risk area or Iraq.

A person must wait three years after the date of departure after having lived five years or more in any malaria risk country(ies) or in a non-risk area within a malarial risk country.

A person is permanently ineligible after the following travel:

- between 1/1/80 and 12/31/96, a total of 3 months or more in the United Kingdom (England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, Isle of Man, Channel Islands, Gibraltar, Falkland Islands)
- between 1/1/80 and 12/31/90, a total of 6 months or more on or associated with a U.S. military base in Belgium, Netherlands (Holland) or Germany
- between 1/1/80 and 12/31/96, a total of 6 months or more on or associated with a U.S. military base in Spain, Portugal, Turkey, Italy or Greece
- a total of 5 years or more in Europe

WEIGHT / HEIGHT: Donors must weigh at least 110 pounds, with two exceptions.

- Double red cell donation: Height and weight criteria differ, depending on the equipment used. A person should call the local blood donation center for more information.
- Young donors: A person who is 18 years of age or younger and all student donors at high school blood drives must also meet additional height and weight requirements, per the following charts:

MALE donors must weigh 110 pounds or more, depending on their height in the following chart:

If you are	4'10"	4'11"	5' or taller
You must weigh at least	118	114	110

FEMALE donors must weigh 110 pounds or more, depending on their height in the following chart:

If you are	5'1"	5'2"	5'3"	5'4"	5'5"	5'6" or taller
You must weigh at least	133	129	124	120	115	110

Young females who are shorter than 5'1" may still be eligible to donate blood. Call the Donor and Client Support Center at 1-866-236-3276 to ask about eligibility.

© The American National Red Cross 2013