

Recruiting Blood Donors



**American
Red Cross**

redcrossblood.org | 1-800-RED CROSS

Be Personal

Individualized, one-to-one contact between you, the recruiter, and a possible donor is the key to success. A poster can't convince someone that his or her donation is important – only another person can do that. Asking someone to give blood is asking that person to share his good health with patients in need of this lifesaving gift. Remember - a blood donation is a very personal commitment, so face-to-face meetings should be your priority!

Be Positive

Here are some good ways to ask people to donate: "Would you like to donate in the morning or afternoon?" "Giving blood is easy. Let me explain the process." "Everyone is signing up, how about you?" "You would want blood to be available if you needed it, so why not donate for someone who needs it now?"

Be Prepared

Remind all donors to bring their I.D. to the blood drive. Also make sure your donors know answers to some of the basic questions people have about donating blood.

What are the medical guidelines for blood donors?

Donors can safely give every 56 days. Most healthy people age 17 and older, or 16 with parental consent, and who weigh at least 110 pounds are eligible to donate blood and platelets. Donors age 18 and under must also meet height and weight requirements.

Why is Red Cross always asking for blood donations?

Blood can only be stored for a short period of time. Red cells can only be used for 42 days following donation and platelets, another part of blood, can only be stored for five days. The American Red Cross must collect blood every day to ensure that enough blood is available for patients who are ill or undergoing surgery.

How long does it take?

With an appointment, the process takes about one hour. Donors register and have their temperature, weight, blood pressure and pulse checked. A health history review and hemoglobin (iron) test is also performed. The actual donation takes about 10 minutes, followed by a visit in the refreshment area.

How much blood is taken?

A little less than a pint, which is considered a unit, of blood is drawn. Your body will replace the fluid loss in about 24 hours. Red cell replacement will begin immediately, but will take four to six weeks for completion.

Does the needle stick hurt?

Although you will probably feel an initial pinch or sting, there should not be discomfort throughout the donation process.

How will I feel after donating?

Most people feel just fine. If you've eaten (eat breakfast if you're donating in the morning), had plenty of water, are thinking positively about your donation and know what to expect, you should be fine. Regular activity can be resumed following the donation.

How often can I give blood?

You can safely give blood every eight weeks (56 days); double red cell donations can be given every 16 weeks (112 days).

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Respond to excuses people give for not donating:

“It takes too long, I’m too busy.” – Are you really too busy to spend an hour of your time to donate a unit of your healthy blood to help sustain life?

“I’m too scared.” – Almost everyone is apprehensive the first time they donate. Let me explain the process, answer your questions and sign you up to go to the blood drive with an experienced donor.

“They don’t want my blood.” – If you were deferred the last time you tried to give because of your pulse, temperature, blood pressure or iron count, it was probably a temporary condition. These four health checks are always made before you are permitted to donate. It’s a free mini-physical for your safety. Please try to donate again.

“My blood type is so common, I only need to donate once a year.” – That statement is absolutely not true. All blood types are needed every day. No type is too rare or too common. Patients come in all types too.

Blood type	How many have it?		How blood is used:	
AB negative	.6%	1 in 167	Coronary artery bypass surgery	1-5 units
B negative	1.5%	1 in 67	Other open heart surgeries	up to 50 units
AB positive	3.4%	1 in 29	Bleeding ulcer	3-10 units
A negative	6.3%	1 in 16	Fractured hip/joint replacement	2-20 units
O negative	6.6%	1 in 15	Brain surgery	4-20 units
B positive	8.5%	1 in 12	Auto accidents, gunshots	up to 50 units
A positive	35.7%	1 in 3	Organ transplants	up to hundreds of units
O positive	37.4%	1 in 3		

Recruitment Strategies & Tips

One of the most common reasons people don’t give blood is simply because they have never been asked. As a blood drive coordinator or committee member, your most important job will be to ask.

Use a personal approach – ask face-to-face. Choose a time when potential donors can give you their full attention, and feel confident you are asking people to do something that helps others. If it is not possible to ask face-to-face, then call on the phone.

Be enthusiastic and positive. New donors’ attitudes toward blood donation may be largely determined by how they were asked. Enthusiasm is contagious.

Form a recruitment team. You don’t have to do it alone. Ask people who are passionate about the cause or who cannot donate themselves to join you in helping recruit others. Ask donors who have scheduled an appointment to bring a friend. And remember – it’s easier for 10 people to recruit 10 donors each than for 1 person to recruit 100 donors.

Ask appropriately. Don’t pressure anyone into donating. Understand how a potential donor feels and answer questions they may have. Give them time to make the decision to give blood.

Educate about the importance of blood donation. The Red Cross does not need blood – patients do. Every two seconds someone in America gets a blood transfusion. Five million patients will need blood this year.

Advertise. Advertise. Advertise. Use promotional posters in common spaces in your building or community (cafeteria, elevator, hallways). Use the organization’s intranet, newsletter or bulletin boards. Use social media to bring awareness to the event.

Reduce the fear of the unknown by explaining what is involved in donating. Educate new donors about basic eligibility requirements, possible deferrals, the donation process and what to expect.

Encourage donors to make appointments in advance. Schedule the appointments evenly to prevent long wait times and explain to donors the need to keep their appointment.

Send appointment reminders. Remind donors of their appointments as the drive draws near. Call no-shows the day of the drive.