

Albumin.

Used for the treatment of shock, extensive burns and in severe liver and kidney disease.

By giving an hour of your time every few weeks, you can help us provide hope and an improved quality of life to many patients and their families.

What is NZBS responsible for?

The New Zealand Blood Service is responsible for supplying blood and blood products to all hospitals across New Zealand. All of the fresh blood components and almost all of the plasma products used in New Zealand are prepared from donations given by volunteer donors from across New Zealand.

What types of products does NZBS provide?

Fresh blood components.

They are prepared from individual blood donations within NZ Blood Service centres. They include red cells, platelets and plasma for direct transfusion to patients.

Plasma products.

These are manufactured by CSL Bioplasma in Melbourne from pools of up to 30,000 donations that NZBS sends to them. The plasma is converted into a range of products (as above). All products made from New Zealand plasma are then returned to NZBS for distribution to New Zealand hospitals.

If you are interested in becoming a plasma donor, talk to one of our staff or call the NZBlood centre nearest you.

(plasmapheresis available at these centres only)

Auckland Donor Centre 0800 692 566
71 Great South Rd, Epsom or 09 523 5733

Hamilton Donor Centre 0800 88 22 33
cnr Lorne & Ohaupo Streets or 07 839 3679

Palmerston North Donor Centre 0800 448 354
Gate 12, Ruahine St or 06 350 8563

Wellington Donor Centre 0800 200 430
Hospital Road, Newtown or 04 380 2243

Christchurch Donor Centre 0800 843 383
87 Riccarton Road or 03 343 9040

Dunedin Donor Centre
cnr Cumberland and St Andrew Sts 03 477 9920

How to become a plasma donor



**SAVE LIVES
GIVE BLOOD**

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Save lives by becoming a plasma donor.

You can help us provide a life-saving resource in just 60 minutes every few weeks. To become a plasma donor you need to:

- be 18 years or over
- weigh at least 50 kgs
- have donated whole blood at least once in the last two years
- meet donor eligibility requirements listed in the donor questionnaire

The suitability of your veins and your haemoglobin level are also factors we need to consider before accepting you as a plasma donor.

What is plasma?

Blood is made up of several components where each component plays a special role: red blood cells, white blood cells, platelets and plasma.

Plasma is the liquid component of blood that carries blood cells, water, proteins, and clotting factors around your body. It makes up just over half of your total blood volume.

Why is plasma needed?

Plasma is used to treat burn victims, people who have lost a lot of blood, kidney patients and chemotherapy patients. It is also used to help treat haemophiliacs and to boost the immune systems of people who are sick or have recently had a major operation.

Over the last few years the clinical requirements for plasma products, particularly immunoglobulin products, have increased at a rate of 10 – 15% per year. This increase is due to identification of more clinical uses of plasma derived products.

New Zealand now requires much more plasma than can be obtained from the whole blood donations. The most sensible way to meet this increased requirement is to collect more plasma by apheresis (explained below).

The difference between giving blood and giving plasma

One plasma donation provides the same amount of plasma as two whole blood donations.

A whole blood donation is a simple process that involves the removal of 470mL of blood. You can safely give whole blood 4 times a year because your body only takes up to 12 weeks to replace the red cells that have been removed.

Plasma donation involves apheresis machines that separate the blood into its different components and then returns those that are not being collected back into your body. Plasma is replaced by your body much more quickly than red cells, so plasma donors can normally donate more often than whole blood donors.

How often can you give plasma?

Because your red cells are returned to you when you give a plasma donation, you can donate every two to three weeks – most people donate monthly. You are under no obligation to continue as a plasma donor and can return to donating whole blood at any time.

How is plasma collected?

Plasma is collected by a process known as apheresis (pronounced ay-fur-ee-sis). It comes

from the Greek word meaning “to take away” or “to separate”. Instead of donating whole blood, you only give the plasma in your blood.

Plasmapheresis is the process of collecting plasma with an apheresis machine. As the blood is taken from the donor, the machine spins the blood to separate the plasma from the other blood components. The plasma is collected into a special collection bag and the remaining red cells, white cells and platelets are returned back to the donor.

This process is repeated several times until enough plasma is collected and normally takes an hour. You can sit back throughout this time and relax.

Is plasmapheresis safe?

Yes. Healthy people can donate plasma regularly, as their bodies can replace their plasma within a few days of the donation. There is a minimal risk of iron depletion because the red cells are returned to the donor. You will be supervised by a trained nurse throughout the whole process and regular blood tests will be taken to monitor your health.

How is plasma used?

Plasma donations can be used to make up to thirteen different products. Some of the most needed products for patients are:

Factor VIII

(also known as anti-haemophilic factor). This is a blood clotting protein used to stop bleeding in people with haemophilia A, as these patients have an inherited lack of Factor VIII.

Immunoglobulin.

Contains infection fighting antibodies and is used to protect patients from diseases like tetanus, chicken pox and hepatitis B. It is also used to boost the immune systems in patients with immune deficiency disorders or following a bone marrow transplant.