

Q: Will I get in trouble if you find illegal drugs in my system?

Healthcare professional/patient confidentiality applies during the interview process with the NZBS nurses.

All information discussed and written on the donor questionnaire is strictly confidential.

NZBS does not test for drugs – legal or illegal. We trust donors to give us accurate information.

If you are deferred, please don't take the deferral personally. We are just trying to protect you and patients who may receive your blood from suffering any adverse effects from the donation. Talk to us about other ways you can help!

To ensure the safety of blood supplied by New Zealand Blood Service (NZBS) to patients in New Zealand, it is important that all blood donors are in good health. This ensures that the donor is protected against problems for his/her own health and that the recipient is protected against the transmission of disease, drugs or contaminated products that could be detrimental to their health.

You may be able to donate blood if you:

- Are a new donor aged 16-70, or are an existing donor (donated in the last 2 years) until your 75th birthday or until your 81st birthday if approved by NZBS Medical Officer.
- Weigh at least 50kg. (if you are a first time donor under 25 years of age, you must also meet the height and weight criteria – tool available at nzblood.co.nz)
- Are in good health and are completely well after having a cough, cold or flu.
- Have waited 3 months following a tattoo or piercing before you can donate. If a piercing was performed by a registered health professional (G.P, pharmacist, etc), you may be eligible to donate after 12 hours.
- Have waited at least 24 hours following a minor procedure (cleaning, fillings or braces) or until you have recovered before donating. For complex procedures, such as tooth extraction, please wait at least 7 days after your procedure and any antibiotic treatment.

You cannot donate blood if you:

- Spent more than a total of 6 months in the United Kingdom, France or the Republic of Ireland between 1980 and 1996 or received a blood transfusion in ANY of these countries since 1980.
- Have ever injected illegal drugs.

How to donate:

- Visit our website www.nzblood.co.nz to check if you are eligible and find where our donor centres and blood drives are located.
- Book an appointment online or by calling 0800 GIVE BLOOD (0800 448 325)
- Please ensure you have eaten during the four hours prior to donation.
- Please bring appropriate ID with you each time you donate e.g. Donor Card, Drivers Licence, Student ID.

Before you donate, check to see if you're eligible at nzblood.co.nz

Epsom Donor Centre

71 Great South Road, Epsom **09 523 5733**

North Shore Donor Centre

441 Lake Road, Takapuna **09 489 8858**

Manukau Donor Centre

Unit B, 116 Cavendish Drive **09 263 4667**

Tauranga Donor Centre

154-168 Cameron Road **07 578 2194**

Hamilton Donor Centre

Gate 1, Waikato Hospital, 21 Ohaupo Road **07 839 3679**

Palmerston North Donor Centre

Gate 12, 50 Ruahine Street, Roslyn **06 350 0963**

Wellington Donor Centre

Hospital Road, Newtown **04 380 2243**

Christchurch Donor Centre

15 Lester Lane, Addington **03 343 9040**

Dunedin Donor Centre

170 Crawford Street, Dunedin **03 477 9920**

To donate, contact us today to book your appointment

0800 448 325
nzblood.co.nz

Download our app now



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What's Stopping You?



SAVE LIVES
GIVE BLOOD

The following brochure is intended to answer some frequently asked questions (FAQ's) regarding donating and eligibility to donate. It is not intended to be an exhaustive list. If you have any questions please contact one of the NZBS donor centres and ask to speak with one of our nurses who will be able to help with your question.

When you donate blood NZ Blood Service staff will ask you questions to check that giving blood will be

- safe for you, and
- safe for the person receiving your blood.

If giving blood may be unsafe for either of these reasons, you may be deferred (i.e. not allowed to donate), either temporarily or permanently.

This means that individuals who do engage in activities such as drug taking may not be able to donate blood. This is necessary to protect patients receiving the blood.

Q: How long does it take to donate blood?

The entire process of giving whole blood takes approximately 60 minutes; plasma donations takes approximately 90 minutes. This includes filling in the Donor Questionnaire, the interview with the nurse and 10-15 minutes to rest and relax after your donation while having light refreshments before leaving the donor rooms.

Q: How much blood do they take?

Whole blood donors donate 470mL of blood. Plasma donors donate between 500mL–900mL of plasma which is determined by your height and weight.

Q: Can I donate if I have had a body piercing or tattoos?

If you've recently had a tattoo (including cosmetic tattoos, such as microblading), cosmetic injectables or a body piercing, you must wait 3 months from the date of the procedure before you can donate. Note: If the cosmetic injectable or body piercing was performed by a registered health professional (i.e. pharmacist, GP) and any inflammation has settled completely, you can donate after 12 hours.

Q: Can I donate if I am a smoker?

Yes, however we strongly recommend you wait at least 1 hour after your donation before having a smoke.

Q: Can I donate if I'm on the contraceptive pill? Does it affect the pill's effectiveness?

Yes you can donate and the action of the contraceptive pill is not affected.

Q: What common prescription medications will prohibit me from donating?

The most important medicines are: antibiotics, some anti-inflammatory medicines and some medicines taken for acne. Depending on the medication you may be unable to donate for

a specified amount of time or permanently. The reasons for not accepting a person on these medicines varies. If you want to find out more about your eligibility to donate blood and any medication you may be taking please speak to a nurse at one of our blood donor centres.

Q: Can I donate if I take iron tablets or health supplements?

If you are only taking over-the-counter iron supplements, you may be eligible to donate. However, any doctor prescribed treatments will mean you have to wait before making a donation. Please call 0800 448 325 and ask to speak to a nurse.

We test for anaemia which may be caused by low iron levels or some other conditions. The test uses a small drop of blood obtained from a finger prick. If you have a low test result you will not be able to donate as giving blood may affect your health.

Vitamin tablets taken as a dietary supplement are OK.

Q: Will donating blood affect my performance on the rugby field or the netball court, etc?

We advise you not to take part in heavy exercise for 24 hours following your donation. This is because it takes approx 12-24 hours for your body to replace most of the fluid volume of the blood you have donated.



Q: Can I go out partying after donating blood (e.g. that night)? Does it affect my ability to handle alcohol?

Most of the blood collected is replaced in the first 12-24 hours. If a large amount of alcohol is consumed within 12-24 hours of donating blood, a person might develop low blood pressure because of the combined effects of alcohol and the reduced blood volume. It will be better to moderate (reduce) your intake for the first day after giving a blood donation.

Q: Can I donate blood if I've been drinking prior to donating? (e.g. drinks on Thursday night and donate on Friday morning)

Persons clearly under the influence of alcohol will not be able to donate until they are sober (approx 1 day). However, as alcohol can cause dehydration in many people, you may not be able to donate blood if you are dehydrated. You need to be well hydrated and have had something to eat within 4 hours prior to donating blood to ensure good blood flow during the donation process and to reduce the possibility of fainting afterwards.

Q: Can I donate if I have a cold sore?

You cannot donate if the cold sore is active, but once it is healed you can donate blood.

Q: Can I donate blood if I am a sexually active gay man?

The prevalence of HIV in NZ is 40 times higher among men who have sex with other men (MSM). Since December 2020 the donor behaviour criteria for sex between men is: "you must not give blood for 3 MONTHS following oral or anal sex with or without a condom with another man (if you are male)". Similar measures are in place in other developed countries.

Q: Can I donate if I've got, or ever had, an STD?

Depending on the type of STD you have or have had in the past, there could be a temporary or permanent deferral that applies.

Temporary deferrals apply to people who have had recent infections or sexual contact involving chlamydia, gonorrhoea or herpes. Please contact your closest blood donor centre, or call 0800 GIVE BLOOD and ask to speak with a nurse to find out whether deferrals will apply to you.

Q: Can I donate if I have taken drugs?

Anyone who has ever injected drugs that were not prescribed by a doctor must never go to a blood donor session and try to give blood. If intravenous or other injected drug use has occurred or is suspected, you cannot donate blood and you will be deferred permanently. People who have injected drugs have a high risk for having a number of virus infections, especially hepatitis C. This infection is usually life-long. Not all viruses can be detected by our blood tests.

NZBS does not want blood that contains any non-prescription drugs that might produce adverse effects in people who receive the blood. This includes (but is not limited to) the list below.

Amphetamines and Methamphetamines (*Street names: Speed, Whiz, Crystal meth, Ice, Shabu, Pure, P, Base, Rock, Crank, Crack*)

Cannabis (*Street Names: Marijuana, Grass, Pot, Weed, Mull, Chronic, Dak, Hash, Smoke, Buds, Skunk, Cabbage*).

Ecstasy (*Street Names: E, Pills, Ecstasy, X, XTC, The love drug, Lollies, Bikkies*)

Alcohol – *You must be sober to donate blood*

Party Pills (*Street Names: "herbal highs" Frenzy, Exodus – The Journey, Nemesis, Nemi, Euphoria, Zoom, Blast, Shotgun, Rapture and Charge*).

If you are under the influence of drugs taken as tablets or swallowed you will be unable to donate on that day. Depending on the drug and usage you may be able to donate in the future. You will need to discuss this with a Donor Nurse in a confidential interview or you can contact us on 0800 GIVE BLOOD and ask to speak to a nurse.

If a person appears to be unable to give an accurate account of their health or to answer the health questions the donor staff may refuse to collect any blood donations and defer the person permanently.