

What you need to know before you donate blood.



Thank you for volunteering to be a blood donor. Each donation you make could save up to three lives.

Before you start on your lifesaving journey, there's some important information you'll need to read.

Keeping everyone safe

Safety is very important to us here at New Zealand Blood Service (NZBS).

It's our job to make sure donation is safe for you and for the people who receive your blood. So, before you donate, it's important we get to know you a little better.

We'll ask you to provide informed consent before you donate. This means that we've explained, and you understand, the:

- risks
- possible side effects
- reasons why some people aren't allowed to donate.

This pamphlet outlines that information and some of the questions we'll ask before you donate. It also explains the key steps involved in the donation process.

Please read it before you give blood.

Who can give blood?

There are some important criteria you need to meet to make sure it's safe for you to give blood. You can give blood if you:

- are aged between 16 and 71
- weigh more than 50kg
- have a safe level of haemoglobin in your blood. (Haemoglobin is a protein that helps carry oxygen around your body and we'll test this before you donate.)
- meet all other eligibility criteria (we will check this with you before you donate).

Scan the QR code to see the full criteria online.



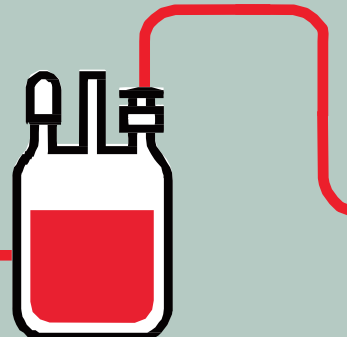
Who can't give blood?

Unfortunately, for the safety of our recipients, we can't accept blood if you have:

- AIDS
- had a positive HIV test
- had medication to treat HIV
- Hepatitis B
- haemophilia or a related clotting disorder and have been treated with clotting-factor made from plasma
- ever been diagnosed with hepatitis C or syphilis, even if treated.

You also can't donate if you have a current or former sexual partner who has or had:

- AIDS
- a positive HIV test
- medication to treat HIV.



Who needs to wait before giving blood?

You'll need to wait three months before donating:

- after working as a sex worker (prostitute) or taking money for sex
- after taking oral medication to prevent an HIV infection, such as pre or post exposure prophylaxis (PrEP or PEP)
- If you have had a new partner or multiple partners and if you've had anal sex
- If you have contracted Gonorrhoea or any other sexually transmitted disease

There is also a three month wait if you've had sex with someone who:

- has the Hepatitis B or C virus
- is a sex worker (prostitute)
- has injected themselves with drugs not prescribed by a doctor
- lives in, or comes from, a country that is high risk for HIV infection
- has haemophilia or a related clotting disorder and has been treated with clotting-factor made from plasma.

Visit our website for more information about these criteria or speak to one of our collections staff.

Please don't donate if you want an HIV or Hepatitis test. You can book one of these with your doctor or a sexual health clinic.

For 24/7 recorded information call the New Zealand AIDS Foundation AIDS Hotline 0800 80 AIDS (0800 80 2437).

The Process

Before you give blood

- Have you had something to eat and drink in the last three hours?
If not, please help yourself to food and drink in the donation room before you give blood.
- Do you have a low blood pressure or feel faint if you stand up suddenly?
Please let us know.
- Are you very anxious?
Tell us. We can help you feel at ease, or you can come back later.
- Are you allergic to antiseptic or sticking plaster?
Let us know. We can make other arrangements.

Registration

You'll complete an initial health questionnaire.

Health check

In a private interview room, one of the staff will check that:

- donation is safe for you
- your blood is safe for donation
- you are over 16 years of age
- your information is correctly recorded
- you agree to your blood being tested.



To maintain the **confidentiality and integrity** of the Health Assessment interview, no other person shall be permitted to accompany the donor during the interview, except for children under the age of 5. This measure ensures that the interview is conducted without intentional or unintentional influence from others, including children who may comprehend the discussion.

Haemoglobin check

Haemoglobin is a protein in the blood that transports oxygen around your body. Your haemoglobin must be high enough for you to donate safely.

We will do a quick finger prick test to check your haemoglobin levels.

Making the donation

We'll get you comfortable in a donation chair and check your details again.

A cuff will be put around your upper arm to help locate a vein.

Your nurse will clean your needle site with antiseptic and insert a needle. It will feel like a pinch or mild sting. Please tell us immediately if you feel any pain after this point.

We use a new needle and bag for every donation, so there's no risk of infection to our donors.

You will donate around 500ml of blood.

Most donations take 5 – 10 minutes.

Once the bag is full, we'll deflate the cuff and remove the needle.

We'll ask you to press on your vein with a pad to stop any bleeding. Then your nurse will apply a protective pad similar to a sticking plaster.

Relax on the chair for another 5 minutes, then make your way to our donor lounge. It's time to enjoy our famous biscuits! And make sure you have a drink or two – drinking liquids helps replace the blood you've just given.

Please spend another 10-15 minutes in our lounge before you leave. This lets your body adjust after making a donation.

After your donation

We'll give you a card with a 'donation code' before you leave. Please read this. It has instructions about what to do if you become unwell in the two days following donation.

**Please call us if you have any concerns on
0800 SAFE BLOOD (0800 723 325)**

Problems

Donating blood is very safe. However, sometimes problems can happen during or after blood donation.



Feeling faint or light-headed

Please tell the nurse immediately if you feel dizzy or unwell during your donation.

Sit down immediately if you feel unwell after your donation – on the ground if necessary. Put your head between your knees for a few minutes and lie down if you need to.

Stay sitting for at least 30 minutes or until you feel well again.

Drinking fluids can help.

Do not smoke for at least an hour after giving blood. Smoking increases the chance of feeling dizzy or faint.

Minor bruising

You may get a small bruise on your arm. It will disappear over a few days.

You can reduce the chance of bruising by not using your arm too much for the first 15 minutes after donation. Avoid heavy work or recreational activities for 12 hours after the donation, if possible.

If your bruise is painful, use paracetamol or an icepack. If this doesn't help, please call us for advice.

Pain

Very rarely, a donation needle may come into contact with a nerve or tendon and cause a sharp pain. Please tell us immediately if this happens.

Bleeding from the needle site.

Reduce the chance of bleeding by not using your arm too much for the first 15 minutes after donation.

If bleeding happens immediately after giving blood:

- lift your arm above your shoulder and press on the needle site
- sit down and ask for assistance from the collection staff.

Be careful when eating or drinking, or putting on a coat.

Low iron levels

- if you donate too regularly.

More information on maintaining iron levels and regularity of donation can be found on our website <https://shorturl.at/IHQSY>

Fast pulse or tightness in the chest

Very rarely a donor may develop a faster than normal pulse or a sensation of tightness in the chest. Tell us immediately if this happens during a donation.

Serious complications

Very rarely, more serious complications happen. These may require medical treatment and/or some restriction in your normal activities. This happens in less than one donation per every 200,000.

Serious problems can include:

- damage to an artery, nerve or tendon when the needle is inserted
- soft tissue swelling due to bleeding or infection
- heart problems for donors with pre-existing heart disease
- 'delayed faint' – when a donor receives a serious injury because of fainting after they've left the donor centre.

What if I develop a problem after I leave?

If you develop a serious problem, contact a doctor or hospital so that it can be assessed. Please also let us know what has occurred.

Please contact us if you have a less serious problem after you leave. We can provide advice. Plus, the information can help us improve our systems for future donations.

Call 0800 SAFE BLOOD (0800 723 325)

Common (1 in 50 – 1 in 100)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling lightheaded/dizzy • Bruising
Uncommon (1 in 100 – 1 in 1000)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fainting • Arm pain
Rare (1 in 2000 – 1 in 10,000)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nerve injury or irritation • Re-bleeding
Very rare (1 in 10 000 – 1 in 100,000)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allergic reaction • Arterial puncture
Extremely rare (less than 1 in 1,000,000)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deep vein thrombosis (DVT) • Thrombophlebitis • AV fistula • Compartment syndrome • Cardiovascular events

What happens to my blood?

Your blood will be tested and processed.

Then your blood joins our blood stocks in hospitals around the country – ready to save the lives of other New Zealanders.

If we pick up any unusual results in testing, we will contact you.

Sometimes we use the blood in other ways, including:

- teaching students how to perform blood grouping
- quality control, to ensure blood products are safe and effective
- help us develop new products and tests to improve diagnosis and treatment for a range of diseases.

Sometimes your blood could be used for research. This is only when the research project is approved by an Ethics Committee. No personal information will be released without your consent.

What happens to my information?

Before donation we will request the following information from you.

- Your name, address and contact details so we can invite you to donate again
- Your date of birth. This enables us to uniquely identify you

- Your ethnicity. This may be provided to the Ministry of Health for statistical purposes
- Relevant medical, travel and behavioural history to enable us to assess your eligibility to donate blood.

Under the Health Information Privacy Code 2020 you have the right to request access to and correction of any information held about you.

Your health information will not be released to any outside agencies unless specifically authorised or required by law.

Our commitment to Aotearoa New Zealand

NZBS is committed to providing enough blood products for use in New Zealand from donations given by volunteer donors.

The need for products made from plasma varies. Most processed plasma products are made sequentially in a process that starts with pooled plasma donations. Not all plasma products made are needed in New Zealand in the amounts available. Any excess may be sold overseas to recover costs of manufacturing.

Blood components that cannot be used clinically may be made available to commercial companies for use in the manufacture of laboratory reagents. This is closely monitored by New Zealand Blood Service using an ethical framework developed by a specialised Ethics Committee.

The revenue from these sales is used to improve the availability of other blood products across New Zealand. Information on revenue obtained by these processes is provided in the New Zealand Blood Service Annual Report.

**Scan to find out
where to donate**



Book now



0800 448 325



nzblood.co.nz



**Scan to download
the donor app**

