

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



## What are the age limits for blood donors?

You must be 17-years-old (16-years-old with parental consent) to donate. There is no upper age limit.

## How often can I donate?

- You can make a whole blood donation every 56 days.
- You can donate double red cells through automation every 112 days.
- You can donate platelets through automation every 2 weeks up to a maximum of 24 times per year.

## How long does it take?

The entire whole blood donation process, from registration to post-donation refreshments, takes about an hour. The actual donation typically takes less than 12 minutes. We encourage donors to make appointments to help avoid delays.

## Are the health history questions necessary every time?

Yes, screening questions must be asked of all donors at each donation. This is a Food and Drug Administration (FDA) requirement that helps blood centers ensure the safety of the donor and the safest possible blood supply.

## Can I donate if I have traveled outside the United States?

It depends on where you traveled. Our trained health screeners will be able to evaluate your travel in order to qualify you to donate blood.

- If you traveled to an area considered endemic for malaria you must wait one year before giving blood.
- Donors who have spent time that adds up to 5 years or more in Europe from 1980 to the present are not eligible to donate.
- Anyone who spent time in the United Kingdom for a total of three months or more from 1980–1996 is not eligible to donate.
- Members of the US military, military employees, or their dependents are not eligible to donate if they spent a total of 6 months or more associated with a military base: from 1980–1990 in Belgium, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, or Germany; from 1980–1996 in Spain, Portugal, Turkey, Italy or Greece.

## Can I still donate if I have a tattoo or body piercing?

You may donate if your ear and/or body piercings were performed with a sterile, one-time, single-use needle. You may also donate if your tattoo was applied with sterile needles and non-reused ink by a licensed facility in Kentucky or in another state by a licensed artist in an establishment regulated by that state.

## I have been deferred in the past for having low iron, should I still try to donate?

Yes, as part of the medical screening process we will check your hemoglobin level to ensure it is high enough for you to donate. Be sure to eat an iron-rich diet prior to your donation.

## Can I donate if I have:

### • High blood pressure?

Yes, as long as your blood pressure is within the acceptable criteria of 180/100 with or without medication.

### • Allergies?

Yes, unless you have a sinus or respiratory infection.

### • Diabetes?

Yes, you may donate.

### • Received a flu shot?

Yes, you may donate.

### • Cancer?

It depends on the type of cancer; some cancers require a waiting period before resuming blood donations. For this reason, it's best to discuss what type of cancer and the treatment you received with one of our health screeners to determine if you are eligible to donate.

## Is it true I can get a free AIDS test when I donate blood?

No. Using blood donation as a way to get tested could put the blood supply at risk and endanger patients because there is a short window period between being infected and having a positive test result. Prospective blood donors must answer honestly the FDA mandated questions on the donor form. It violates Kentucky law to answer the donor questions untruthfully. If you are at risk of getting AIDS, do not donate blood. For information about free HIV testing visit [lexingtonhealthdepartment.org](http://lexingtonhealthdepartment.org) or call **859.288.AIDS**.

## What kinds of medications will prevent me from donating?

Most medications do not prevent donation. However, we will want to know if you are taking any medications below. Each donor must be evaluated on an individual basis.

- Accutane
- Aricept
- Avodart
- Coumadin or another anticoagulant
- Hepatitis B Immune Globulin
- Human Growth Hormone
- Insulin from cows (Bovine or Beef)
- Propecia
- Proscar
- Soriatane
- Tegison