



**American  
Red Cross**

**Blood  
Services**

The American Red Cross needs the ongoing support of blood donors during this pandemic to ensure blood products are available for patients when they need it. Fall is generally an abundant time for blood collections with colleges, high schools and corporate blood drives. As many of these continue to restrict access to facilities, **Red Cross blood drives at many locations continue to be canceled and we are relying on community blood drives and donation centers.**

Each day, the Red Cross needs to collect nearly 13,000 blood donations and more than 2,600 platelet donations to meet the needs of patients at about 2,500 hospitals and transfusion centers across the country. **We need everyone's help! Please continue donating during this time or consider trying it for the first time.**

This email has a lot of information about the need for blood, donating, promotions and a new way to sign up using technology. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Christine Homan at [Christine.homan@redcross.org](mailto:Christine.homan@redcross.org).

**To find a blood drive near you simply go to [redcrossblood.org](http://redcrossblood.org) and enter a zip code.**

#### **COVID-19 Antibody Testing and Convalescent Plasma:**

- All donated units of blood are currently being tested for COVID-19 antibodies. Donors can see their results in 7-10 days.
- Individuals who have fully recovered and received a verified COVID-19 diagnosis are needed to sign up to give convalescent plasma now by completing the donor information form at [RedCrossBlood.org/Plasma4COVID](http://RedCrossBlood.org/Plasma4COVID).
- COVID-19 survivors have a unique ability to help up to three patients recover from the virus with each donation.
- Since April, thousands of COVID-19 survivors have rolled up their sleeves to give their antibody-rich plasma, enabling the Red Cross to collect and distribute more than 30,000 potentially lifesaving convalescent plasma products to hospitals nationwide.
- Right now, the Red Cross is distributing convalescent plasma products faster than they are coming in, resulting in an emergency shortage of this potentially lifesaving treatment.

#### **The need for African American Blood Donors remains high:**

- Sickle cell disease is the most common inherited blood disorder in the U.S. About 100,000 people of various racial and ethnic backgrounds are living with sickle cell disease, most of whom are of African or Latino descent.
- A single sickle cell patient can require multiple blood transfusions per year throughout their lifetime to treat complications from sickle cell disease.
- People who only carry the sickle cell trait may be eligible to donate blood.
- Red blood cells carry markers on their surface called antigens that determine blood type. Some are unique to specific racial and ethnic groups, and because of this, many sickle cell

disease patients are more likely to find a compatible blood match from a donor of the same race or ethnicity.

- **Very important:** Last Spring, more African American blood donors gave at Colleges and high schools than at any other blood drive type. With many of these drives canceled due to COVID-19, the need for more African American blood donors for Sickle Cell patients remains urgent! African American blood donations given at educational blood drives in 2019 was over 15,000 and is down to 2,700 this year.

#### **October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month:**

- This October, the Red Cross encourages eligible donors to give blood or platelets to support those battling cancer, as well as others in need of transfusions.
- Cancer and cancer treatments can put patients at risk for low red blood cell and platelet counts.
- Cancer patients may need blood products on a regular basis during chemotherapy, surgery or treatment for complications.
- Platelet transfusions are often needed by patients with cancer to help prevent life-threatening bleeding.

#### **It remains very safe to donate blood**

Each Red Cross blood drive and donation center follows the highest standards of safety and infection control to ensure the health of staff and donors.

#### **BLOOD TYPE/PRODUCT-SPECIFIC MESSAGES**

**Platelets** play a critical role in the treatment of millions of Americans fighting cancer and other chronic diseases, as well as those recovering from traumatic injuries. Since platelets must be used within five days of donation, platelet donors are constantly needed.

- During a platelet donation, blood is collected by a device that separates platelets, along with some plasma, from whole blood and returns the remaining blood components back to the donor. Learn more at [RedCrossBlood.org/Platelets](https://www.redcrossblood.org/Platelets).

#### **Power Red Donations:**

- Eligible donors with types O, A negative and B negative blood are urged to make a Power Red donation, where available.
- Power Red donors give a concentrated dose of red blood cells during a single donation, allowing them to maximize their impact.
- During this type of donation, red blood cells are separated from other blood components, and the plasma and platelets are safely and comfortably returned to the donor.
- Please check requirements for Power Red at [Redcrossblood.org](https://www.redcrossblood.org)

**Promotion:**

**Donate blood in October and be entered for a chance to win a \$1,000 Amazon Gift Card!**

**So many great ways to sign up to donate blood!**

- The Red Cross **Blood Donor App** makes it easy and convenient for donors to schedule and manage their donation appointments, track the lifetime impact of their donations and see their COVID-19 antibody results as well as access their donor card and use it as their official form of identification at donation appointments.
  - Blood donors with the Blood Donor App can view their health history information, including blood pressure, hemoglobin levels and pulse rate, on the donor card within the app.
  - Download the free app by texting “BLOODAPP” to 90999 or search for the “American Red Cross.”
- The **Red Cross Blood scheduling skill for Amazon Alexa** helps users schedule a blood donation appointment, find blood drives nearby and get notification reminders before an appointment.
  - Amazon Alexa users can enable this skill and blood donors can link to their Red Cross accounts to manage their appointments.
  - Donors can open the Red Cross Blood skill with a selection of prompts such as, “Alexa, open Red Cross Blood Skill” and ask, for example, “Alexa, find a blood drive.”
- The **Red Cross**, along with other blood collection organizations, has partnered with **Facebook** to help raise awareness about the need for blood donors and make it easier to find opportunities to donate as part of Facebook’s Blood Donations feature. To sign up, go to [facebook.com/donateblood](https://facebook.com/donateblood).

Of course, appointments can still be scheduled by visiting [RedCrossBlood.org](https://RedCrossBlood.org) or calling 1-800-RED CROSS

Thank you for your time and your support and we hope to see you at a blood drive soon!

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