

The Blood Donation Process

If you are 17 years or older (parental or guardian consent is required for 16 years old) in generally good health, free from any blood borne disease and weigh at least 110 pounds, you can become a Voluntary Blood Donor.

The donation process is very simple and requires the following steps:

- Registration of donor
- Mini health checks comprising of: your body weight, pulse, blood pressure, temperature and HB (Iron) level. The donor's blood type will also be identified at this stage.
- A brief interview to determine if your sexual lifestyle and medical history permits you to donate blood. This session is very private and confidential.
- The actual blood donation stage where a unit (less than a pint) of blood will be taken.
- Refreshment

The entire blood donation process takes 20 minutes.

A person, who fits the criteria, can donate blood every two months.

Blood donation allows the body to produce new red blood cells which carries oxygen around the body. Once these new cells are replicated, it allows the individual to feel more rejuvenated and healthier.

Blood cannot be stored for long periods. One unit can be processed into three component parts each of which has the potential of saving a life when used to treat separate medical conditions.



Q: Why should I donate blood?

A: Blood is needed all the time to provide to those who may need blood transfusions due to accidents, numerous surgeries including open heart surgery, kidney transplant, bone marrow transplant, burn victims and diseases of the blood e.g. Sickle Cell Anemia and Thalassaemia.

Q: What blood types are needed?

All blood types are needed. Blood is divided into several blood types.

A: A+ A- B+ B- AB+ AB- O+ O-

Persons with O negative blood are Universal donors-they can give to anyone: and those with AB positive are universal receivers-they can receive from anyone.

Q: Is there artificial blood?

A: NO. Scientists are yet to find a successful substitute for human blood. This is why blood donors are so vital to the lives of those that are in need of blood.

Q: Do I have enough blood in my body to donate?

A: Yes. The body contains 10-12 pints of blood. A blood donation is approximately one pint, called a unit of blood.

Q: Will donating blood hurt?

A: You may feel a slight pinch in the beginning, which only lasts a couple of seconds, but there should be no discomfort during the process.

Q: Can I get HIV/AIDS from donating blood?

A: NO. There is no risk of contracting HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, or any other diseases through the donation process. Each collection kit is sterile, pre-packaged and used only once.

Q: Is donated blood tested?

A: All donated blood is tested for blood type as well as for infectious diseases such as Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, HIV, Syphilis, Malaria, Microfilaria, Chagas and HTLV (Human T- Lymphotropic Virus).

Q: Will donating blood interfere with my sex life?

A: NO. Donating blood does not affect your sex life, since there is no relationship between giving blood and your sex drive.



Q: Can I donate blood if I have a cold or flu?

A: NO. In order to donate, you must be in generally good health (symptom free)

Q: Can I donate blood if I have High blood pressure?

A: Yes. If your blood pressure is under control and within the limits set in the donation guidelines.

Q: Can I donate blood if I have Diabetes?

A: Diabetics on oral medications are generally accepted as donors.

Q: Can I donate blood if I have Anemia?

A: NO. Your blood count needs to be within the limit set in the donation guidelines. This is currently 12.5.

Q: How can I increase my iron level?

A: You may help increase your iron level by eating foods that are rich in iron such as: red meat, dark green vegetables, and fruits or by taking a multivitamin that contains iron.

Q: Can I donate blood if I have been taking aspirin or medication prescribed by my doctor?

A: Yes. You may donate, but you must provide information on all medications being taken.

Q: Can a woman donate blood during her menstruation?

A: Yes. It is quite safe for a woman to donate blood while having her period. It does not affect her in any way.

Q: How will I feel after I donate?

A: Most people feel great after giving blood. It is advised that you avoid lifting heavy objects or strenuous exercise for the next 24 hours; otherwise you can resume full activity as long as you feel well.

Q: How much time does it take for my body to replace the blood that I donated?

A: Not long at all. The volume of fluids will adjust within a few hours of your donation. The red blood cells will be replaced within a few weeks.

Q: Are blood donors paid?

A: No. Blood donated or transfused in Guyana is given by voluntary blood donors. No one should buy or sell blood



Q: Why are there often blood shortages?

A: Due to unpredictable demands from trauma incidents and other causes. Enough persons are currently not donating voluntarily and regularly.

Q: How long is it until my blood is used?

A: Most blood donations are processed and available for use within 24 to 72 hours.

Q: Where can I donate blood?

A: National Blood Transfusion Service, Lamaha Street, GPHC Compound or any of our regional collection sites

- Suddie Public Hospital, Region 2
- West Demerara Regional Hospital, Region 3
- New Amsterdam Regional Hospital, Region 6
- Lethem Regional Hospital, Region 9
- Linden Hospital Complex, Region 10

Or at a Blood Drive!

Q: What can I do if I'm found to be ineligible to donate blood?

A: You can still support blood donations by becoming a collaborator or a volunteer. The NBTS is always in need of collaborators to organize mobile blood drives and volunteers to assist.

