

SUGGESTIONS FOR

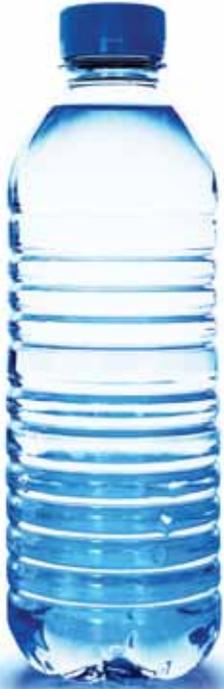
ENHANCING YOUR DONATION EXPERIENCE

A Guide to Giving the Gift of Life

You probably know there are good reasons to give blood, but if you haven't donated before, it's normal to be a little nervous. To make your donation as safe and pleasant as possible, please read this guide. It tells you what to expect when you donate, ways to cope with concerns you might have, and important reasons to give blood.

While the actual blood draw takes only a few minutes, the entire process may take an hour or more. The following chart gives you an overview of what happens when you donate.

STEPS	DONATION PROCESS	HOW LONG?
Registration	Present your proof of age. Read information sheet about donating blood.	5 minutes
Health History	Provide basic demographic and health information. Answer health history questions (<i>confidential</i>). Undergo mini-physical exam (<i>check your temperature, blood pressure, and heart rate</i>).	15 minutes
Hydration Station	Eat a salty snack before donation. Drink water or other beverage before donation.	5 minutes
Donation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recline in a donor chair near other donors.• Answer a few questions and extend your arm.• You may feel a brief "sting" at first; once the needle is in place, it usually takes less than 10 minutes to draw the unit of blood.• Use AMT to help prevent a reaction (<i>see back</i>).• It may be necessary to lower the upper part of your donor chair and/or raise your legs.• The needle is removed and a bandage applied.• Get up slowly to allow your body to adjust.	25 minutes
Revitalization Station	Relax for 15 minutes; have a salty snack and a drink.	15 minutes
After Donation	Avoid strenuous physical activity or heavy lifting for a few hours.	



SMALL MEASURES CAN MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE

Before you donate...sleep, eat, and drink! Get a good night's sleep. Eat regular meals. Make sure you are not donating on an empty stomach! Most importantly, drink fluids before you donate.

The value of drinking fluids and eating a salty snack can't be emphasized enough. The salt triggers your body to release hormones that cause your body to absorb more fluid and raise your blood volume. In addition, drinking fluid immediately before donating causes your stomach wall to expand, triggering a reflex that temporarily increases your blood pressure. Together these two actions help prevent one of the most common types of donor reactions—light-headedness.

Applied Muscle Tension (AMT) is another great technique to maintain good blood pressure during the donation process. Tighten your calves, thighs and abdominal muscles while silently counting to five. Release the tension and relax the muscles for a count of five. Repeat this tightening and relaxing exercise from the time you get on the donation bed until you are released to the Revitalization Station. Squeeze and relax your hands only when asked to do so by your phlebotomist.

After the blood bag is filled, but before you leave the donation bed, dangle your feet over the side of the bed. Sit with your feet over the edge for a minute or so before standing and walking to the Revitalization Station. You will be given a refreshment and asked to rest for 15 minutes.

PROTECT YOURSELF AFTER YOUR DONATION

Avoid strenuous physical activity or heavy lifting for a few hours. Follow all the instructions you are given after you donate. Tell someone if you do not feel well after you give blood, especially if you become light-headed. Although rare, this can happen even hours after your donation.

Other symptoms that you need to watch for are dizziness, a feeling of warmth, or becoming disoriented. If you have any of these feelings or think you may pass out, take immediate action to prevent injury to yourself.

If you are driving, pull over, turn off the engine and call someone for help! If you are standing, sit! If you are sitting, put your head down or lie down on the floor so you do not fall from the chair. When you pass out, your muscle tone disappears and you fall. Becoming light-headed and passing out after blood donation is called syncope (pronounced sing-ko-pee). It occurs most often in donors who are dehydrated. The greatest danger is not from fainting, but from injuring yourself as you fall!

ALL DONE! ENJOY THE DAY. YOU'VE HELPED SAVE A LIFE!

DID YOU KNOW?

- The entire process takes about one hour.
- The actual blood donation takes 5 to 7 minutes.
- Less than 5% of eligible people give blood.
- You can donate every 56 days.
- Blood makes up 7% of your body weight.
- Red cells must be used within 42 days.
- 1 out of every 10 hospital patients needs blood.
- Someone in the U.S. gets a blood transfusion every 3.5 seconds.
- Blood donors make a difference!

