

National Blood Donor Month

When is National Blood Donor month?

More than 50 years ago — on December 31, 1969 — the president of the United States signed a proclamation designating January as National Blood Donor Month (NBDM). The new monthly observance was meant to honor voluntary blood donors and to encourage more people to give blood at a time when more blood is needed. January marks the 55th anniversary of National Blood Donor Month – a time to recognize the importance of giving blood and platelets while celebrating the lifesaving impact of those who roll up a sleeve to help patients in need. It is also a time to encourage new and lapsed donors to resolve to give blood during one of the most difficult times to maintain a sufficient blood supply – the winter months.

This year's National Blood Donor Month comes as the nation's blood supply has dipped to concerning levels and could force hospitals to delay essential blood and platelet transfusions. Blood donors of all blood types – particularly type O blood, the blood group hospitals need most – are needed now to give blood or platelets to help meet daily hospital demands.

What is the minimum age to donate blood?

- While there may not be a blood donation age limit, there are some blood donation requirements to consider. According to the American Red Cross, you must weigh a minimum of 110 pounds to donate blood and be at least 17 years of age.

Who can't donate blood?

- Who should not donate People who might not be able to donate blood include those who: have used needles to take drugs, steroids, or other substances that a doctor has not prescribed.
- Blood transfusions are given to patients in all kinds of circumstances, including serious injuries, surgeries, childbirth, anemia, blood disorders, cancer treatments and many others. This consistent demand makes National Blood Donor Month an integral piece of the puzzle. Each day the Red Cross must collect 13,000 pints of blood from across the country to meet the needs of patients. This makes a blood and platelet shortage during the colder months a crucial matter for the Red Cross and the hospitals they serve.

- Blood is a perishable product that can only come from generous volunteers. A blood donation takes about an hour from start to finish, but the actual donation itself only takes between 8 to 10 minutes. By spending an hour giving blood, donors can aid their community and help save lives! Each blood and platelet donation can save the lives of as many as three people, so this January be a hero in your community and find the closest blood drive or blood donation center in your area.
- Simply download the American Red Cross Blood Donor App, visit [RedCrossBlood.org](https://www.redcrossblood.org) or call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) to make an appointment or for more information. All blood types are needed to ensure a reliable supply for patients.
- Blood donors can now save time at their next donation by using RapidPass to complete their pre-donation reading and health history questionnaire online, on the day of their donation, prior to arriving at the blood drive. To get started and learn more, visit [redcrossblood.org/RapidPass](https://www.redcrossblood.org/RapidPass) and follow the instructions on the site.