

# Give more and give platelets

Blood types needed: A+ A- B+ B- O+ AB+ AB-



**Gillian** needed 86 units of blood products when she suffered hemorrhaging during childbirth

## Why are platelets important?

Platelets are very fragile, short-lived blood cells that are essential for normal blood clotting. They must be transfused within seven days of donation, which means they are always needed to ensure availability for hospitals every day.

Platelets are often used to treat:

- Cancer patients undergoing treatment that depletes their platelet count
- Accident victims
- Patients with blood disorders
- Bone marrow transplant patients

## How does the donation process work?

Unlike a whole blood donation, where you give *whole* blood with all three blood components—platelet donations use a special automated process called apheresis (AYfur-EE-sis) to collect only your platelets.

The apheresis process uses a cell separator that collects platelets by spinning the blood during your donation, separating the platelets from the other blood components. The platelets are collected in separate bags and the remainder of your blood is returned to you along with some anticoagulant. This cycle is repeated several times to generate the required volume of platelets.

## Why not take my platelets from my whole blood donation?

It takes six to ten blood donors to obtain the same amount of platelets collected from a single platelet donation. Patients usually require that amount per treatment and quite often, more. So, instead of six to ten blood donors, it takes just one platelet donor to provide a patient with one treatment of platelets.

## How long does the process take?

From registration through refreshment, when you donate platelets you should allow about 2.5 hours. This allows you plenty of time to register and answer the questionnaire, give your donation, and then relax for 15 minutes or more after. This extra time is vitally important for the platelets patients rely on every day.

## How often can I donate platelets?

You can donate platelets every seven days, up to 24 times a year! Please consider donating platelets as part of your regular routine.

## Are there special eligibility requirements?

In addition to general eligibility requirements, your platelet count, blood volume (based on height and weight), and medications you may take also play a role. Using one of your blood samples that we take during a donation, a simple test is run to determine if your platelet count meets the eligibility criteria to donate this special product.

If you are eligible to give platelets, we ask you to refrain from aspirin or products containing aspirin for 48 hours prior to donation. Although it may be safe for you to take aspirin, it can compromise the platelets being collected and your donation cannot be given to a patient. Platelet donors must sign an additional consent form at the time of donation.

## Why are females tested for HLA antibodies?

Females interested in donating platelets will be screened for HLA antibodies. HLA antibodies can develop after being pregnant; they aren't normally harmful to the person who acquires them, but they can be harmful for a patient who receives a platelet or plasma transfusion. Female donors found to be negative for HLA will be eligible to donate platelets.

## Schedule today

Talk with your donor specialist or sign up to make a platelet donation today. Call 800.933.2566 or visit [nybc.org](https://nybc.org).



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