

Your guide to giving life

Learn how blood donation makes a genuine difference

What it means to give blood

Giving blood has got to be one of the most rewarding things you can do to help another person — there's no other feeling like it.

Donated blood can be used in many life-giving ways. The person receiving it could have cancer, be going through a difficult pregnancy, or they could be someone who relies on regular transfusions to live a healthy, happy life — or even to live.

Can I donate?

To do the most good, every donation needs to be as safe as possible for the donor and the person receiving it. You should be good to give if:

- you're aged 18–75, if it's your first time (you can be older than 75 if you've donated in Australia before)
- you feel fit and healthy, and don't have a cold, flu or any other illness
- you weigh at least 50 kg
- you've got your photo ID, donor card or the Donate Blood app
- on the day before your donation, you've had 8 glasses of fluid if you're a woman and 10 glasses if you're a man, as well as plenty to eat
- you've had at least 750 mL (3 large glasses) of fluids in the 3 hours before your donation
- you've completed the Donor Questionnaire and met any eligibility criteria, and
- you've been assessed at the blood donor centre (we'll check you have suitable veins and haemoglobin levels).

There are some cases where we may have to re-schedule. Like, if you take certain medication, you're pregnant, you've travelled recently, you've had dental treatment in the last week, or you've had a tattoo in the past 4 months. However, if the tattoo was done on licensed or regulated premises in Australia (like a commercial tattoo parlour or a cosmetic clinic) and is healing well, you can book in to donate plasma instead.

Unsure if you can give blood?

Find out more at donateblood.com.au or give us a call on 13 14 95

What happens on the day?

Don't worry, you're in safe hands.

But so you know what to expect, here's a walk-through of what's involved:

1. When you arrive, you'll need to complete our Donor Questionnaire. It's totally confidential and designed to protect you and the person who receives your blood.
2. Before we get going, you'll be asked to have two more glasses of water and we'll give you some information on easy muscle tensing exercises that can help stop you feeling faint during your donation.
3. You'll then have a private, confidential interview with a trained staff member and we'll check your haemoglobin level (a protein that carries oxygen around your body and contains iron) and take your blood pressure. If it's your first time donating, we'll also ask for your height and weight.
Safety is our top priority, so these health checks are for everyone.
4. You'll be with us for about an hour, but the actual giving process takes just 15 minutes (sometimes less!). Our team will be on hand to help the whole way through, so if you're feeling unwell or uncomfortable, let someone know straight away.

Straight after you donate

You'll have done something genuinely life-saving and we hope you'll be feeling great about it. However, it's really important to relax, refresh and follow our advice.

- Rest in the chair for five minutes and, when you're ready, sit up with your legs dangling over the edge.
- Take a seat in our refreshment area. It's important to rehydrate and have something to eat, so help yourself to a cool drink and a savoury snack.
- You'll need to stay at the donor centre for at least 20 minutes (even if you feel fine). It's a great time catch up on some reading, listen to music, or make the most of our free Wi-Fi.

After you've left the donor centre

There is a chance that you'll get a bruise or feel faint after your donation. To help stop this from happening, be sure to follow the advice below.

For the next 2 hours:

- keep the bandage on your arm, and
- stay hydrated.

For at least 8 hours:

- don't do any heavy lifting
- drink plenty of water (at least another three large glasses)
- eat regular meals
- don't stand up for long periods
- stay cool — avoid hot showers, sitting or standing in the direct sun and choose cold drinks rather than hot drinks, and
- don't drink alcohol.

For at least 12 hours

Avoid strenuous exercise (e.g. riding, jogging, or going to the gym) or hazardous activities, including activities or jobs where public safety may be affected. You should check any employment or safety requirements you have. If unsure, please ask us at your interview.

Let us know how you go

If you start to feel unwell, or if you're worried about anything at all, don't hesitate to give us a call on **13 14 95**

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Donating blood is a very safe process

We use brand new equipment for every donation — that includes the needle, tubing and bags.

Most people give less than 10% of their blood volume in one donation, which is usually replenished in just two days. But, because it takes longer to replace the iron in your blood, you'll need to wait 12 weeks before you can give again.

After you give blood, your body needs iron to help replace the haemoglobin and red cells you give in your donation. Over time, giving blood can contribute to low iron levels, so we've put together some helpful tips on replacing your iron at donateblood.com.au/iron-health

Women aged 18–45 are especially susceptible to becoming low in iron, which is why we recommend a short course of iron supplements after each donation. For more about looking after your iron levels, head to donateblood.com.au/iron-health-women

We'll always check that you have enough haemoglobin to give before you donate. **However, this test is different to checking your iron levels (you can have normal haemoglobin but low iron), so if you're worried, speak to your doctor before donating.**

What do we test for?

We work hard to protect the people receiving your blood and test every donation for blood type as well as HIV, human t-lymphotropic virus (HTLV), syphilis and hepatitis B and C.

Remember, we're testing to protect the people who receive your blood donation. We'll tell you if we find anything, but for your personal health, you need to get checked by a doctor.

One donation does wonders

Your blood can be made into many different life-giving medical treatments — with a third of all donated red cells going to people fighting cancer.

Each blood donation you make is separated into three parts, each used in different ways.

Red cells

- **34%** cancer and blood diseases
- **19%** anaemia
- **18%** heart surgery and severe burns
- **13%** heart, stomach and kidney diseases
- **10%** fractures and joint replacements
- **4%** help pregnant women, new mothers and young children
- **2%** road incidents and trauma

Plasma

Used in 18 life-giving ways, including:

- Protecting people with immune deficiencies
- Protecting against tetanus
- Treating brain disorders
- Protecting newborns against Rh disease

Platelets

Treats serious bleeding, often in patients with leukaemia and other cancers.

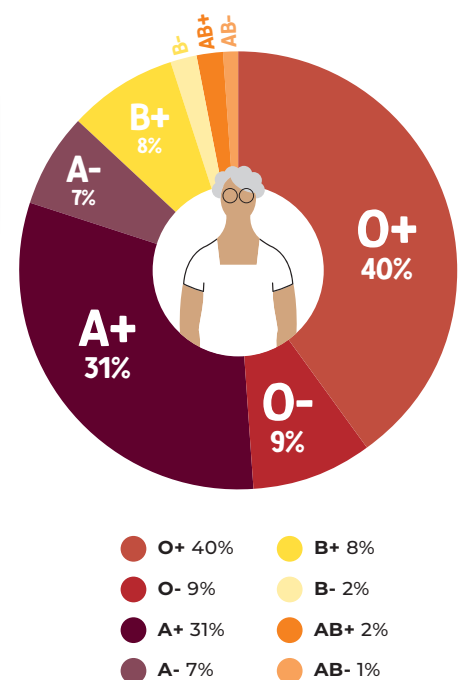
Does my blood type matter?

When someone is given blood (called a transfusion), it's best to give them the same blood type as their own.

Some blood types are more compatible than others, and some are universal, like O negative. Because it can help people with any blood type, O neg can save the day when there's no time, or it isn't possible, to find out a patient's blood type — like in a life-threatening emergency.

Learn more about your blood type and how it can help at donateblood.com.au/learn/about-blood

Percentages of blood types in Australia



Remember, every donation gives life. So, whatever type you give, someone out there will be truly grateful.

Where can I give blood?

To find your nearest donor centre, book a donation, or learn more about giving blood, get in touch on **13 14 95** or head to donateblood.com.au