



Wellness by the Month

National Blood Donor Month

Every two seconds someone in the U.S. needs blood. During the winter and summer, blood is usually in short supply. January is National Blood Donor Month and a particularly difficult time for centers to collect donations due to travel, illness, and weather conditions.

Only **five percent** of healthy Americans donate blood on a regular basis.

To Give Blood:

- You must be 17 and weigh more than 110 pounds.
- You must be healthy, meaning you feel good and can perform normal daily living tasks.
- You can donate every 56 days.

What Happens When You Donate Blood?

1. **Registration:** You will register and give a brief medical history. All of this information will be kept strictly confidential.
2. **Mini-physical:** A nurse will check your temperature, pulse, blood pressure, and red blood cell count. Your overall health will be assessed.
3. **Donation:** About one pint of blood is given during a donation, which takes about 10 -15 minutes.
4. **Refreshments:** Drinks and snacks are provided while you rest for a little bit. The whole process takes an hour.

How Is One Pint of Blood Used?

One pint of blood can be separated into three components, which can be used to treat three different individuals.

1. Red Blood Cells have a shelf life of 35 days and are used mainly for surgery and trauma patients.
2. Plasma will be frozen and stored for up to one year. It is mainly used in treating shock and burn victims.
3. Platelets are good for only five days and are primarily used to treat cancer and leukemia patients.

How Else Can You Help?

- Organize a blood drive.
- Volunteer at your local blood bank.

For more information, visit www.givelife2.org or contact the American Red Cross of Southeast Michigan at (313) 833-4440.