

NIH Blood Donor Post-Donation Information

THANK YOU!

The blood you donated will be used to treat patients here at the NIH Clinical Center.

Please stay in the recovery area for about 15 minutes after your donation to eat and drink something before you leave. When you donate a unit of blood the amount of blood in your circulatory system is reduced by about 10%. With adequate fluid intake your blood volume should return to normal within 12 hours. Let us know right away if you have any questions or concerns.

AFTER YOU GIVE BLOOD...

- Drink an extra four (8 ounce) glasses of liquids and avoid alcohol **over the next 24 hours.**
- Keep the wrap bandage on for **the next 2-3 hours** then remove it.
- To avoid a skin rash, clean the area with soap and water.
- Do not do any heavy lifting, vigorous exercise, or work from heights for the **rest of the day.**
- If the needle site starts to bleed, apply pressure to it and raise your arm straight up for about 5-10 minutes or until the bleeding stops.
- If you become dizzy or lightheaded, sit down or lie down **IMMEDIATELY.** Do not attempt to resume activity until all symptoms have resolved.

If symptoms persist for more than 30 minutes call the NIH Blood Bank at:

301.496.8335

Information regarding *Complications After Blood Donation*, *Maintaining Your Iron Level After Blood Donation*, and *Athletes and Blood Donation* on the back.

 **Call us at 301.496.8335 if you...**

- ▶ Remember important health information that you forgot to tell us.
- ▶ Decide that your blood may not be safe to give to another person because:
 - You have AIDS or have ever tested positive for HIV.
 - You did not report that you had engaged in activity that puts you at risk of being infected with HIV or hepatitis
- ▶ Are diagnosed with an infection, like West Nile virus, Zika, Dengue or babesiosis.
- ▶ **If you have been diagnosed with Novel Coronavirus 2019 infection**, please notify the blood bank **as soon as possible.**



National Institutes
of Health

Clinical Center
Department of Transfusion Medicine



Blood Bank

COMPLICATIONS AFTER BLOOD DONATION – Call the NIH BLOOD BANK at 301.496.8335

Dizziness and Fainting

Some donors may have lightheadedness and/or nausea after donation, some donors may faint.

If you start to feel dizzy:

- **STOP WHAT YOU ARE DOING**; sit or lie down until you feel better.
- If you happen to be driving, PULL OVER and park until all symptoms have resolved.
- Drink a few extra glasses of fluids over the next 24 hours. Avoid alcoholic beverages.
- Abstain from any activity where fainting might lead to injury for the next 24 hrs or until you feel better.
- Call us if symptoms persist for more than 30 minutes; for any medical emergency, seek immediate medical attention before calling us.

Bruises

Bruising or pain at the site of the needle may occur after blood donation as a result of bleeding under the skin. Swelling or discoloration may occur and move up or down the arm, or around to the elbow. The bruise may change colors and take a week or more to heal completely.

If you develop a bruise:

- Apply a cold pack periodically to the bruised area for the first 24 hrs, then intermittent warm, moist heat.
- For pain, use over-the-counter pain medications that **DO NOT** contain aspirin.
- You may need additional care if:
 - You have tingling or numbness in your fingers or arm.
 - You have redness, swelling, or pain where the needle was inserted.
 - Your symptoms get worse.

MAINTAINING YOUR IRON LEVEL AFTER BLOOD DONATION

Donating a unit of whole blood or double red cells (2-units) removes iron from your body, which you need to make new red blood cells. Low iron levels may cause anemia. Learn more about iron and blood donation at <https://ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets/Iron-Consumer/> and follow this advice:

- Eat a healthy, balanced diet of iron-rich foods (i.e. meat, fish, fresh spinach, fortified cereals, beans, etc.)
- Take a multivitamin containing iron, or an iron supplement if you are:
 - A woman 16- to 50-years-old who donates 2 or more units a year
 - A man or a woman older than 50 who donates 3 or more units a year
- Talk with your doctor about your iron level, donation frequency, and whether you need supplemental iron.

ATHLETES AND BLOOD DONATION

Athletes should wait about 12 hours to resume strenuous exercise after blood donation, depending on how they feel. Blood donation causes fluid loss which the body replaces within 24 hours when you drink extra fluids.

As a precaution, do not donate blood on the same day of a competition or strenuous practice.

Your body also replaces the red blood cells (the cells that deliver oxygen to muscles and tissues) that are lost during whole blood donation, within about five weeks, depending on nutrition and iron status. Competitive athletes may notice a marginal decrease in exercise tolerance for about **one week** after whole blood donation. Please plan ahead to best schedule your donation with sports and other activities.

PROBLEMS AFTER DONATION? PLEASE CALL THE NIH BLOOD BANK AT 301.496.8335.