

Blood Donation **FAQs**

Is it safe to donate blood?

Yes. The supplies used to collect your blood are sterile and only used once. You cannot get HIV or any other infectious disease from donating blood.

How does the blood donation process work?

Just as the Gift of Life can take the form of a life-saving organ, it can also take the form of a critical blood transfusion, and ConnectLife is the organization offering Western New Yorkers the opportunity to save and enhance the lives of neighbors – whether through organ, eye, tissue, or community blood donation.

It's a simple thing to do that takes less than an hour. Just think, potentially saving the life of up to 3 people takes less time than it takes to watch a television show.

There are 4 easy steps to blood donation-

Registration: Photo ID must be presented prior to donation to identify you at every donation.

Interview: to determine if you are all right to donate we will ask questions about health, travel and medicines.

Mini-physical: Take your blood pressure, temperature and pulse. Take a small blood sample to make sure you are not anemic

Phlebotomy: Blood donation takes 5-15 minutes.

How much blood do I have in my body?

Women have about 10 pints, and men about 12 pints of blood in their bodies.

How much blood is taken?

Whole blood and platelet donations are about 1 pint. One pint is roughly equal to 1 pound.

How long will it take to replenish the pint of blood I donate?

The plasma from your donation is replaced within about 24 hours. Red cells need about four to six weeks for complete replacement. That's why at least eight weeks are required between whole blood donations.

How often can I donate?

You can donate whole blood every 56 days. Red blood cells are the oxygen carrying cells. They can take two weeks or longer to fully return to normal.

You can donate platelets every two weeks. Platelet and plasma components are replaced in the body more quickly than red cells. Platelets will return to normal levels within a few hours of donating.

You can donate double red cells every 112 days. Three annual donations will provide the same number of life-saving red cell transfusions as six visits.

Are there age limits for blood donation?

You must be 17 years old to donate blood, or 16 years old with parental permission to donate.

Blood Donation **FAQs** cont.

How long do I have to wait to donate blood after getting the COVID vaccine?

There is no deferral time for the COVID vaccine. As long as you are feeling well you are able to donate.

How long do I have to wait to donate blood after getting a flu shot?

There is no deferral time for any influenza vaccine, including vaccines for seasonal influenza and H1N1.

What is the universal blood type?

Type O negative is the universal donor and can give blood to any other blood type. Eight percent of the U.S. population has O negative blood.

AB positive is the universal recipient and can receive blood from any other blood type. Two and a half percent of the U.S. population has AB positive blood.

Can I get paid for my blood donation?

We do not provide compensation for any type of donation, including plasma.

Are health history questionnaires necessary every time I donate?

Yes. ConnectLife must screen donors at each donation. This is an FDA requirement.

Is the ConnectLife Community Blood Service affiliated with the American Red Cross?

No. ConnectLife is Western New York's ONLY community blood center. In 2005, ConnectLife, then Unyts, was approached by area hospitals looking for a cost-effective alternative for purchasing blood. By collecting, processing and distributing all the blood locally, ConnectLife's Community Blood Service has already saved local hospitals over \$10 million.

Since beginning collections in June 2007, ConnectLife is the primary supplier of blood products to Kaleida Health, ECMC, Brooks-TLC Health System, Dunkirk, Eastern Niagara Hospital, Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center, Olean General Hospital, Wyoming County Community Health System and Bradford Regional Medical Center. This accounts for over 75% of the blood needs in WNY. Our local hospitals need to maintain an adequate supply of blood for emergency situations and it is up to ConnectLife and the generosity of our donors to help provide safe levels of blood inventory.

ConnectLife is affiliated with America's Blood Centers (ABC), North America's largest network of community-based, independent blood programs. Recognized by the U.S. Congress for its critical work in patient care and disaster preparedness and response, the federation provides half of the U.S. blood supply and operates more than 600 blood donor collection sites.

The blood centers that are part of ABC, including ConnectLife, serve more than 150 million people and provide blood products and services to more than 3,500 hospitals and healthcare facilities across North America. ABC's U.S. members are licensed and regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.