



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What are the age limits for blood donors?

You must be 17 years old (16 years old with parental consent) to donate. There is no upper age limit.

How often can I donate?

- You can make a whole blood donation every 56 days.
- You can donate double red cells through automation every 112 days.
- You can donate platelets through automation every 2 weeks, up to a maximum of 24 times per year.

How long does it take?

The entire whole blood donation process, from registration to post-donation refreshments, takes about 30-40 minutes. The actual donation typically takes less than 12 minutes. We encourage appointments to help avoid delays.

Are the health history questions necessary every time?

Yes, screening questions must be asked of all donors at each donation. This is a Food and Drug Administration (FDA) requirement that helps blood centers ensure the safety of the donor and the safest possible blood supply.

Can I donate if I have traveled outside the United States?

Our trained health screeners will be able to evaluate your travel in order to qualify you to donate blood.

- If you traveled to an area considered endemic for malaria you must wait three months before giving blood.

Is it true I can get a free AIDS test when I donate blood?

No. Using blood donation as a way to get tested could put the blood supply at risk and endanger patients. There is a short window period between being infected and having a positive test result. Prospective blood donors must answer the FDA mandated questions on the screening tablet honestly. It violates state law to answer these questions dishonestly. If you are at risk of getting AIDS, do not donate blood. For information about free HIV testing, call 859.288.AIDS or visit lexingtonhealthdepartment.org.

I have been deferred in the past for having low iron, should I still try to donate?

Yes, as part of the medical screening process we will check your hemoglobin level to ensure it is high enough for you to donate. Be sure to eat iron-rich foods prior to your donation.

Can I donate if I have:

- **High or low blood pressure?**
Yes, as long as your systolic (top) number is between 90-180 and diastolic (bottom) number is within 50-100, as required by the FDA.
- **Allergies?**
Yes, unless you have a sinus or respiratory infection.
- **Diabetes?**
Yes, you may donate.
- **Received a flu shot?**
Yes, you may donate.
- **Cancer?**
It depends on the type of cancer; some cancers require a waiting period before resuming blood donations. For this reason, it's best to discuss what type of cancer and the treatment you received with one of our health screeners to determine if you are eligible to donate.
- **A heart or lung condition?**
It depends on the type of condition. Some conditions require a wait period before resuming blood donation. It's best to discuss your condition and treatment with a health screener to determine eligibility.
- **Tattoos?**
Yes, as long as it was applied with sterile needles and non-reused ink by a licensed facility in Kentucky or another state by a licensed artist in an establishment regulated by that state.
- **Piercings?**
Yes, as long as your piercings were performed with a sterile, one-time, single-use needle.

What types of medications may prevent donation?

Most medications do not prevent donation. However, we will want to know if you are taking certain types of medications. Each donor must be evaluated on an individual basis.

- Visit bit.ly/KBC_MDJ to see the medication deferral list.