

Blood 101:

A Snapshot of America's Blood Supply and Its Donors



Altruistic, volunteer blood donors remain irreplaceable.

Despite advances in medical technology, blood cannot be artificially made in a laboratory, making the impact of blood donations on patient care especially profound.

Independent community blood centers collect roughly 60 percent of all blood used annually in America.

The resulting transfusions are instrumental in addressing acute and chronic care needs like trauma, childbirth complications, cancer treatment, surgeries, and transplants.



Ensuring the safety of the nation's blood supply is the top priority for America's Blood Centers and the entire blood community.

Multiple layers of safety are in place to protect those that rely on blood transfusions. To maintain the highest degree of safety, all U.S. blood centers are regulated by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and must adhere to following donor eligibility policies and safeguards:

A donor history questionnaire: All prospective donors who visit a U.S. blood center must complete an FDA-required donor history questionnaire before each donation.

Temporary and permanent donor deferral history: Information on prospective donors who were temporarily or permanently deferred from donating is recorded by blood centers as required by the FDA.

Processing and testing of every donation: Every blood donation undergoes sophisticated laboratory processing and testing as required by the FDA. More than 12 tests are performed on every donation to identify the blood type and make sure the blood is safe for transfusion.

Rigorous quality standards: After the testing process, donated blood components are stored according to Current Good Manufacturing Processes (cGMPs) until they are needed for patient transfusion.

Local and national monitoring: The FDA closely monitors the safety of the blood supply and transfusions through such mechanisms such as the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Transfusion Transmissible Infectious Monitoring System.

About America's Donors

- 3% of the population donates blood each year.
- 65% of the population is eligible to donate blood.
- 12% of whole blood donations come from communities of color.
- 26% of all whole blood donations are from first-time donors.

About Blood Transfusions

- A blood transfusion is needed every 2 Seconds.
- One donation can help two or more patients in need.
- More than a quarter of the U.S. blood supply is used by patients battling cancer.
- Diverse blood donations are essential for patients with conditions like sickle cell disease, which require precise matches beyond blood type to include racial background for effective treatment.

