

MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR GIFT

Helpful and Healthful Tips for AMERICAN RED CROSS BLOOD DONORS

The American Red Cross wants your donation to be as safe and successful as possible. We hope the following suggestions will help you be the best donor you can possibly be.

DAY OF DONATION

Drink extra water and fluids before you donate to replace the volume of blood you will donate and to prevent low blood pressure. You should continue drinking extra fluids after donation, too. Coffee and tea don't count, because the caffeine causes your body to lose more fluid than the drinks provide.

Eat foods containing protein or complex carbohydrates, such as bread, cereal, fruit or lean meat. You will feel more comfortable during and after donating. Before you donate, a small meal or snack will do.

But avoid eating fatty foods, such as hamburgers, french fries, ice cream or cheese before donating.

As part of our vigorous safety screening, after you donate, your blood will be tested for infections to make certain it is safe for transfusion. These tests can be affected by fatty materials - lipids - that appear in your blood for several hours after eating fatty foods. When this occurs, testing cannot be performed, and we may not be able to use your blood.

By following these suggestions, you will help make your donation as safe and successful as possible for patients who count on your blood.

On behalf of the patients whose lives you will save, thank you for your interest in donating blood to the American Red Cross. Your gift really does help others to live.

BETWEEN DONATIONS

Give your body plenty of iron. When you donate whole blood or packed red cells, you lose the iron contained in red blood cells. Eat plenty of iron-rich food to replace these cells between donations.

Iron comes from the food in your diet. Foods rich in iron include red meat, fish, poultry, broccoli, beans, raisins and prunes. Many cereals are fortified with iron, and iron is often included in multiple vitamin preparations. Eating foods rich in vitamin C (citrus fruit) helps your body absorb the iron you eat.

"I'm here because perfect strangers gave blood to save my life. People take blood for granted. I figure I can do it [give blood] and should do it."

— Dan Mitchell,
blood recipient
and donor,
Toledo, Ohio



**American
Red Cross**

1-800-GIVE LIFE
www.redcross.org