



Coastal Bend Blood Center

Quick Facts:

Frequently Asked Questions

Why should I give blood?

Blood donors save lives. It's that simple and that important. More than four million Americans would die each year, if not for blood donors. In our community alone, more than 120 people a day must donate blood in order to maintain the blood supply in the ten-county area served by the Coastal Bend Blood Center.

How can I prepare for my donation?

Try to get a good night's sleep and eat a hearty, low-fat meal before you give. Also, you should avoid nicotine for at least an hour before donating.

If your hemoglobin levels tend to be low, you may consider adding iron-rich foods to your diet. These foods include meats (especially red meat and liver), fish and eggs. Beans, grains, nuts, some dried fruit and green vegetables can also pump up your iron intake.

How long does a routine blood donation take?

Allow about 45 minutes to 1 hour for the entire process, which includes your mini-physical, donation and a brief stay in our donor area for refreshments. The actual blood donation will take only 6 to 10 minutes.

May I donate if I am on medications or have had a severe illness?

Many medications, including those for high blood pressure and birth control, are acceptable as long as your "mini-physical" shows that your blood pressure, temperature and blood hemoglobin levels are okay. You usually can donate once you have completely recovered from surgery or illness. If you have questions regarding your eligibility, please call the main office at 361-855-4943 or 800-299-4943.

Can I get HIV/AIDS by giving blood?

No. You cannot contract AIDS or any other diseases from giving blood. Your blood will be drawn with a sterile needle, which is individually packaged for your use only. After your donation, our staff will dispose of the blood collection equipment appropriately.

How will I feel after I give?

Most donors feel great. When you donate blood, you give less than a pint. The average adult body contains 8 to 12 pints. And the body makes more blood constantly.

You should avoid nicotine for 30 minutes after donating. Also, drink plenty of fluids, and avoid alcohol and caffeine for the rest of the day, if possible.

How long does blood last?

Blood is a living, perishable liquid. Blood centers can store red blood cell donations for up to 42 days, but platelet donations (the component that enables blood to clot) are viable for only five days. To make sure that our community blood supply is prepared to meet all needs, the Coastal Bend Blood Center encourages donors to give regularly, particularly during the summer and winter holidays.

Can I donate blood if I just got a tattoo and/or body piercing?

If you received a tattoo or body piercing in a state-licensed facility and there is no sign of infection, there is no deferral period for the procedure. If you received your tattoo or body piercing from a non-state-licensed facility, you must wait at least one year.

Ask our staff about our apheresis donation processes. You may want to tailor your blood donation to meet specific needs.

For more information, call the Coastal Bend Blood Center at 1-800-299-4943 or visit our website at www.coastalbendbloodcenter.org