

What you need to know before you donate

Blood donation can help save patients' lives. To meet the needs of patients throughout our state, BloodCenter of Wisconsin must collect over 700 units of blood 6 days a week, every week of the year. You can do more good than you know by donating blood on a regular basis.

For additional information, please read the following sections, or call 1-877-BE-A-HERO:

Donor Eligibility
Medications and health history
Common health history questions
Biggest eligibility myths

Donor Eligibility

All donors should be in good health on the day of donation. To be eligible to donate, you must:

- Be at least 17 years old.
- Weigh at least 110 lbs.
- Be free of major cold, flu, and allergy symptoms.
- Not have had hepatitis after age 11.
- Not have had any risk factors/behaviors associated with HIV/AIDS.

If you have questions about your eligibility, or questions after your donation, click [here](#) to e-mail BloodCenter of Wisconsin and a staff member will get back to you within 48 hours.

Medications and Health History

Most medications are acceptable. Click [here](#) for a list of unacceptable medications and an explanation as to why they are unacceptable.

Donors must be infection-free at the time of donation. If you are taking an antibiotic for an active infection, please wait until the infection has cleared before donating.

It is also important to know your health history. Be ready to discuss any past or present health conditions or surgeries. Your health history is confidential and will not be shared with anyone other than BloodCenter of Wisconsin staff members.

Common Health History Questions

Below are some common conditions/situations that people ask about.

Antibiotics – You can donate three days after finishing antibiotics for an infection (bacterial or viral). You can donate if you are taking antibiotics to prevent an infection, for example, following dental procedures or for acne. Antibiotics for acne do not disqualify you from donating.

Dental work – You can donate if there is no infection.

Flu Vaccination – You can donate if you are feeling well.

Heart disease – A history of heart disease may require a letter of approval from your physician. Final approval is subject to review by a BloodCenter of Wisconsin physician. This will be determined during your health history when you come in to donate.

Infections – You must be infection-free.

Injections/Vaccinations – Certain injections and vaccinations require a wait before



Although most people are eligible to give blood, less than 5% do.

Contact Us:

To make an appointment to donate, visit www.bcw.edu, or call **1-877-BE-A-HERO**.

Donor Center Locations

Brown Deer
5960 W. Brown Deer Road
Brown Deer, WI 53223

Greendale
7010 W. Grange Avenue
Greendale, WI 53129

Kenosha
8064 39th Avenue
Kenosha, WI 53142

La Crosse
1800 Jackson Street, Suite C
La Crosse, WI 54601

Manitowoc
333 Reed Avenue
Manitowoc, WI 54220

Marshfield
508 N. Central, Suite 101
Marshfield, WI 54449

Milwaukee (Downtown)
638 N. 18th Street
Milwaukee, WI 53233

Racine
1120 S. Sunnyslope Drive
Racine, WI 53406

Sheboygan
1018 S. Taylor Drive
Sheboygan, WI 53081

Waukesha
2111 Springdale Road
Waukesha, WI 53186

Wauwatosa
8733 Watertown Plank Road

donating. Please bring the name of the injection or vaccination and the date it was administered.

Menstruation – Women can donate during their periods.

Piercings – Ear or body piercing using single-use equipment in an approved setting is acceptable.

Pregnancy – Women who are pregnant should not donate. Please wait to donate until 6 weeks after giving birth. Women who are breast-feeding are eligible to donate.

Tattoos – In February 2005, our policy toward tattoos changed. Now, if your tattoo was applied by a licensed facility in Wisconsin, you can donate blood. If your tattoo was applied by an unlicensed facility or a facility outside Wisconsin, we require a 12-month waiting period from the time the tattoo was applied.

Travel – If you have traveled to a malarious area in the past year, you may not donate until 12 months after return from travel to the malarious area. If you have ever had malaria, you must be symptom-free for 3 years.

BloodCenter of Wisconsin performs all blood donations using sterile, disposable equipment throughout the donation process. You cannot get AIDS or any other disease by donating blood.

Biggest Eligibility Myths

Myth: "I am taking medication so I can't donate."

Fact: Most medications do not impact your ability to give blood. Persons on a variety of medications can safely donate. Click [here](#) for a list of unacceptable medications and an explanation as to why they are unacceptable.

Myth: "Once I tried to give blood but my blood count was too low. That means I can't ever give blood."

Fact: Just because your blood count was a little low at one point in time does not necessarily mean that you are chronically anemic and cannot give blood. A simple blood test will be performed at the time of your donation to determine if you can donate.

Myth: "I gave blood six months ago so I'm not eligible to give again for a while."

Fact: The fact is, donors can donate whole blood every 8 weeks; platelets every 3 days (not more than twice a week or 24 times a year); plasma every 4 weeks; or a double red cell unit every 16 weeks.

Doing more good than you know.

Medication Deferral List

Please tell us if you are now taking or if you have EVER taken any of these medications:

- ❖ **Proscar (finasteride)**—Usually given for prostate gland enlargement.
- ❖ **Avodart (dutasteride)**—Usually given for prostate enlargement.
- ❖ **Propecia (finasteride)**—Usually given for baldness.
- ❖ **Accutane, Claravis (isotretinoin)**—Usually given for severe acne.
- ❖ **Soriatane (acitretin)**—Usually given for severe psoriasis.
- ❖ **Tegison (etretinate)**—Usually given for severe psoriasis.
- ❖ **Growth Hormone from Human Pituitary Glands**—Used only until 1985, usually for children with delayed or impaired growth.
- ❖ **Insulin from Cows (Bovine, or Beef, Insulin)**—Used to treat diabetes.
- ❖ **Hepatitis B Immune Globulin**—Given following an exposure to hepatitis B. **Note:** This is different from the hepatitis B vaccine which is a series of 3 injections given over a 6 month period to prevent future infection from exposures to hepatitis B.
- ❖ **Coumadin (warfarin)**—Usually given to treat patients with blood clots.

If you would like to know why these medicines affect you as a blood donor, please keep reading.

- ❖ If you have taken or are taking **Proscar, Avodart, Propecia, Accutane, Soriatane, or Tegison**, these medications can cause birth defects. Your donated blood could contain high enough levels to damage the unborn baby if transfused to a pregnant woman. Once the medication has been cleared from your blood, you may donate again. Following the last dose, the deferral period is one month for Proscar, Propecia and Accutane, six months for Avodart and three years for Soriatane. Tegison is an indefinite deferral.
- ❖ **Growth hormone from human pituitary glands** was prescribed until 1985 for children with delayed or impaired growth. The hormone was obtained from human pituitary glands, which are found in the brain. Some people who took this hormone developed a rare nervous system condition called Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (CJD, for short). CJD has not been associated with growth hormone preparations available since 1985.
- ❖ **Insulin from cows (bovine, or beef, insulin)** is an injected material used to treat diabetes. If this insulin was imported into the U.S. from countries in which “Mad Cow Disease” has been found, it could contain material from infected cattle. There is concern that “Mad Cow Disease” may be transmitted by transfusion.
- ❖ **Hepatitis B Immune Globulin (HBIG)** is an injected material used to prevent infection following an exposure to hepatitis B. HBIG does not prevent hepatitis B infection in every case, therefore persons who have received HBIG must wait 12 months to donate blood to be sure they were not infected since hepatitis B can be transmitted through transfusion to a patient.
- ❖ **Coumadin** affects the ability of blood to clot. Donors taking coumadin should not donate plasma.

If You Are Planning to Donate Platelets Today

Please tell us if you are currently taking any of the following medications:

- ❖ **Plavix (clopidogrel)**—Plavix and the generic clopidogrel are antiplatelets usually prescribed to prevent strokes and heart attacks. Donors currently taking this medication should not donate platelets.
- ❖ **Dipyridamole**—Dipyridamole prevents platelet clumping and is often used to prevent blood clots from forming. Donors currently taking this medication should not donate platelets.
- ❖ **Ticlid (ticlopidine)**—Ticlid has been used to prevent stroke. Donors currently taking this medication should not donate platelets.