

Blue Cross® VIRTUAL WELL-BEING

How to Support a Blood Drive

January is the American Red Cross' National Blood Donor Month. Celebrate by hosting a blood drive for your employees. Blood is typically in short supply after the winter holidays, so it's a great time to donate.

The Red Cross provides about 40% of our nation's blood and blood components, all from generous volunteer donors. But supply can't always meet demand because only about 3% of age-eligible blood people donate blood. Each donor helps meet patient needs. Here's some additional information:

- About 36,000 units of red blood cells are needed every day in the U.S.
- Nearly 7,000 units of platelets and 10,000 units of plasma are needed daily in the U.S.
- Nearly 21 million blood components are transfused each year in the U.S.
- The average red blood cell transfusion is approximately three units.
- Type O is the blood type most requested by hospitals.
- Each year, an estimated 68 million people in the U.S. donate blood.
- 13.6 million whole blood and red blood cells are collected in the U.S. in a year.
- Red blood cells must be used within 42 days; platelets must be used in five days.



One donation can save as many as three lives, and someone in the U.S. needs blood every two seconds. And, donating blood doesn't just benefit recipients. There are health benefits for donors, too:

- Emotional and physical health benefits: According to the Mental Health Foundation, helping others can reduce stress, improve emotional well-being and decrease negative feelings.
- Free health check: When you donate blood, you have to undergo a health screening that checks pulse, blood pressure, body temperature and hemoglobin levels. Blood is also screened for several diseases.
- Support for healthy iron levels: With each unit of blood donated, a person loses about a quarter of a gram of iron, which gets replenished from food eaten in the weeks after donation. The fluctuation in iron is beneficial to blood vessels and diseases related to abnormalities in blood vessels, such as heart attack and stroke.
- Support for a longer life: A study in Health Psychology found that people who volunteered for altruistic reasons had a significantly reduced risk of mortality four years later than those who volunteered for themselves alone.

Ready to schedule a blood drive? Here are some tips:

- Contact the Red Cross or a local blood bank organization.
- Determine a date, time and place for the blood drive.
- Promote the blood drive internally through email, a company newsletter and word-of-mouth.
- Consider providing employee donors with an appreciation gift.
- Turn the blood drive into a friendly competition.

Sources: efr.org*, redcrossblood.org*, health.com*, healthline.com*, shrm.org*

*Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and Blue Care Network don't own or control these websites.