**Why should I donate blood?**

Online Q&A  
Updated April 2016

**Q:** Why should I donate blood?

**A:** Safe blood saves lives and improves health. Blood transfusion is needed for:

* women with complications of pregnancy, such as ectopic pregnancies and haemorrhage before, during or after childbirth;
* children with severe anaemia often resulting from malaria or malnutrition;
* people with severe trauma following man-made and natural disasters; and
* many complex medical and surgical procedures and cancer patients.

It is also needed for regular transfusions for people with conditions such as thalassaemia and sickle cell disease and is used to make products such as clotting factors for people with haemophilia.

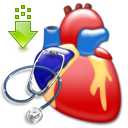
There is a constant need for regular blood supply because blood can be stored for only a limited time before use. Regular blood donations by a sufficient number of healthy people are needed to ensure that safe blood will be available whenever and wherever it is needed.

Blood is the most precious gift that anyone can give to another person — the gift of life. A decision to donate your blood can save a life, or even several if your blood is separated into its components — red cells, platelets and plasma — which can be used individually for patients with specific conditions.

#### Here are the reasons why you should donate blood.

**1. Free Mini-Medical Check Up.** Before donating blood, donors are asked for a brief health history and tested for basic physical health. You have the chance to find out if your pulse, blood pressure, body temperature, cholesterol and hemoglobin levels and other vital signs are healthy or not. If you are found eligible to donate blood, you are allowed to give blood every 56 days, so it means that you can also get a completely free physical examination three to six times a year. Donating blood is also a fast and safe way of losing weight because you burn 650 calories every time you do this.

**2. Decrease Cancer Risk.** According to the Miller-Keystone Blood Center, regular blood donation is associated with lowered risks for cancer including lung, colon, liver, throat and stomach cancers. So if you want to help lower your risk of cancer, donate blood regularly. Risk levels dropped in correlation with how often donors give blood. Want to stay away from cancers far as possible? Roll up those sleeves and vow to be a regular blood donor now!

**3. Reduce Risk Of Heart Attack.** There are no conclusive evidence for this study yet, but several physicians have noted that blood donors have less cases of heart diseases than non-donors. Donating blood improves cardiovascular health. The Florida Blood Services reports that people who donate blood regularly over the years have an 88% lower risk of heart attack and a 33% lower risk of any severe cardiovascular event, such as stroke. Blood donation has heart-protecting benefits because by donating blood regularly, you can prevent blood from thickening too much. So when you give blood, the blood that remains in your body goes through a process called as hemodilution, making your blood diluted or thinner. This is the same process that women undergo during menstruation, which explains why pre-menopausal women have had lower rates of heart diseases compared to men in their same age group.

**4. Replenish Blood.** You know the old adage “Some things must go first so better things can come”? This is very much true for blood, too. When you give a pint, your body immediately starts to replenish the lost blood. Some people worry that if they donated blood, they could lose so much blood and that it may be unhealthy for them. That’s a myth! The truth is, you are helping your body function more efficiently by letting go of some blood.  
This is because once you give blood, you get rid of the old red blood cells and your body produces new red blood cells that are more efficient at carrying oxygen throughout the body. Your body replaces the blood volume within 48 hours of donation, and all of the red blood cells you lose during the process are replaced within 4-8 weeks. Your blood is completely replenished, which means your body stays healthy and you perform better!

**5. If You’re A Universal Donor, The More You Need To Donate Blood.** People with O- (“read O negative”) are known as the universal donors, which means they can donate blood to people of all blood types. Only 7% of the population has O- blood type, which makes them very rare. If you are a universal donor, you owe it to the world to give your blood, knowing that there are lots of them who need yours.

**6.** [**Become A Hero**](http://bloodbanker.com/plasma/plasma-donation/how-you-can-be-a-hero-in-london-olympics/)**.** What if I told you that 1 pint of your blood can save a car accident victim, a burn patient, and a cancer patient? Would you still hold yourself from donating? You may not fully realize this, but your blood can save people’s lives in a million ways. It can be used in surgeries, car accidents, in times of war and natural disasters, and to treat illnesses like kidney and liver diseases and cancer. You may not know the people who can benefit from your donated pint, but it doesn’t change the fact that you have saved lives in one way or another. A toast to the instant hero in you!

**7. Receive Incentives.** Aside from getting free cookies and refreshments after donating, there are blood centers that give incentives for your time and effort. Some blood drives give away t-shirts, gift certificates, tickets, and other valuables to express their gratitude for your participation. After donating blood, you walk out with high pride and some cute incentives at hand!

Receive Incentives**8. It’s Free.** The best things in life are free and donating blood is one of them! When you donate blood, you don’t only become healthier and you haven’t just saved a life, you also get to do these life-changing acts without spending a dime! How is that for a treat?

Donating blood is as not as scary as you might think. A prick of the needle can come a long way. After all, donating blood is a win-win situation both for the donor and recipient.  
Now that we know the benefits of donating blood, we must practice this act of altruism as often as we could and encourage others to do the same as well. This June 14, 2013, the world will celebrate the World Blood Donor Day (WBDD). It’s a global campaign and there are over seventy countries around the world that will give honor to the voluntary donors who choose to help other people by donating blood.