

What Happens to Donated Blood?

After collection, blood is separated into three different components – red blood cells, platelets and plasma. This separation enables a single donation to save up to three lives.

Common uses for blood components:

- » **Red Blood Cells** ... deliver oxygen to the body and are needed to replenish blood lost during surgeries and for anemia. They last between 35 and 42 days.
- » **Platelets** ... are most commonly used to stop bleeding. Platelets are often needed by cancer and leukemia patients undergoing chemotherapy. Because they last just five days, they are constantly in demand.
- » **Plasma** ... is used to maintain clotting and is transfused for burns, shock and liver disease. When frozen, it can be stored for up to one year.

Thirteen different tests are performed on each donation. Acceptable units are usually ready for release to hospitals for transfusion within two days.

BBH receives blood orders from hospitals every day. In general, blood is delivered to most Oahu hospitals twice a day, and to most neighbor island hospitals once a week.

DONOR PROFILE: Paul Cafferty

Paul Cafferty, a retired Hawaiian Electric Company employee of 30 years, is the company's top donor at 211 pints of blood...and counting!

"I give because, well, it's become a habit," he says with a smile.

"When other guys started catching up with me, it gave me more motivation to keep on giving. It became like clockwork – go to the Blood Bank at 6:30 in the morning every eight weeks!"

