

Frequently Asked Questions

Why should I donate blood?

Every day, hundreds of people's lives depend on volunteer blood donors. By giving the gift of life, you will help to ensure that blood will be there for you, the people you love and anyone else who needs it.

How long does a blood donation take?

The entire process takes about an hour and includes some paperwork, a confidential interview and a vital signs check. The actual collection of blood takes just five to eight minutes.

Does it hurt to donate?

Comfort levels vary from person to person, but many donors say the needle insertion feels like a slight pinch and it's all over before you know it! This part of the donation process lasts only about five to eight minutes. Most donors forget the uneasiness once they know how good they'll feel about having helped save up to three lives.

How much blood do you take?

A medical professional will draw one pint of blood.

I am worried about fainting. What can I do to prevent a reaction?

- Drink 8-10 glasses of water throughout the 24 hours prior to your donation.
- Get a good rest the night before your donation.
- Eat a hearty meal before donating.
- Avoid caffeine before donating.

These steps will help ensure a safe donation experience. The BBH collection staff is trained to handle adverse reactions.

How will I feel afterward?

After resting for five minutes and enjoying refreshments to replenish your fluids, you should feel fine and ready to resume your daily activities. You should refrain from heavy lifting or extreme physical exertion for 24 hours.

Can I "catch anything" by donating blood?

Donating blood is completely safe. All equipment used for the donation is sterile and disposable. It is used only once and never used again. It is impossible to get AIDS or any other disease by giving blood.

Where does the blood go after I donate?

The blood is separated into three components: red blood cells, platelets and plasma. Thirteen different tests are performed to ensure safety. The lifesaving products are then transported to civilian hospitals statewide to meet the need of Hawaii's patients.

To whom does the blood go?

Blood donations help people of all ages and walks of life. Typical recipients include cancer patients, open heart surgery patients, patients undergoing organ transplants, mothers and babies during delivery, people with bleeding ulcers, and accident and trauma victims.

Who can donate?

The qualifications to be a blood donor are simple:

- Be in good health.
- Be at least 18 years old
(17 years old with signed BBH parent/legal guardian consent form).
- Weigh at least 110 pounds.
- Have a valid photo ID with date of birth.

Does my donation really make a difference?

Yes. Because your blood is separated into three different components – red blood cells, platelets and plasma – one donation can help save the lives of up to three different patients.

Fun Fact

Blood donors can make a donation once every 56 days and platelet (apheresis) donors can give every two weeks, up to a maximum of 24 times per year.

If all blood donors gave three times a year, blood shortages would be a rare event; if one more percent of all Americans gave, there would be no blood shortage. The current average in Hawaii is about two donations per donor annually.