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## INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

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- ◆ Parental permission is required for all 16-year-olds to donate blood. This is not required for 17 year olds.
- ◆ **If your son or daughter needs parental permission to donate, then he or she will need to turn in a signed consent form to the donation site.** A signed consent form is required each time the student plans to donate. Please be sure to read this pamphlet and understand the donation process before signing the consent form.
- ◆ Most donors have uneventful donations and do fine afterwards. Some donors may become lightheaded or dizzy during or after the donation or may faint or experience other injury. Young, first-time donors are more likely to experience reactions than other donors. SMC Blood Donor Program staff are trained to recognize and treat complications resulting from blood donation.
- ◆ Every donation is tested for HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. It is also tested for hepatitis B, hepatitis C, and other infectious diseases. If any test result suggests that your son or daughter may have an infectious disease or is disqualified from donating blood in the future, we will communicate with your son or daughter directly.
- ◆ The SMC Blood Center maintains the confidentiality of information we obtain about a donor, and we will release a donor's confidential information to his or her parents only with the donor's consent.

***If you have questions about blood donation, please contact the SMC Blood Donor Program (908-685-2926).***

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## What Happens During the Blood Donation Process?

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1. **Registration**
  - Remember to bring your photo ID and, if required, the signed parental consent form.
  - Bring the names of medications that you are taking.
  - Bring a list of the places you have traveled outside the US and Canada in the last 12 months.
  - Read the educational material about donating blood.
  - Ask staff if you have questions.
2. **Health History & Mini Physical**
  - Donors that are 16 years old must weigh at least 120 pounds.
  - Donors over 17 years old must weigh at least 110 pounds
  - All donors must feel healthy and well, and meet all other criteria.
  - We will take your temperature, check your blood count, and measure your blood pressure and pulse.
  - We will ask you questions during a private and confidential interview. This protects your health and the safety of patients who receive blood transfusions.
3. **Donation**
  - We will cleanse an area of your arm and insert a needle to draw blood.
  - The collection takes about 10 - 15 minutes. You can relax, listen to music, talk to other donors, or read while the bag is filling.
  - We will collect about a pint of blood. A staff member will remove the needle and place a bandage on your arm.
4. **Automated Donations**
  - Blood can be donated as Whole Blood or Double Red Cells/ Platelets using automated technology. Because one blood donation can be separated into 2 to 3 components, you have the potential to save 3 lives with a single donation.
  - Blood donation is a safe procedure using single use sterile supplies. Reactions like fainting and bruising occur, but are not frequent. More serious reactions and injuries, including brief seizure activity, nerve or artery injury from the needle, are rare. For blood drawn with automated technology, side effects may include blood loss, and tingling of the lips or limbs.
  - A portion of your blood, not needed for transfusion, may be used for research or education. Research may include finding normal ranges for blood contents or educating laboratory students. You will not be reimbursed and may not have access to results of any research using the blood. Research results, age, race and/or gender may be shared with the research sponsor in a coded fashion that does not reveal your identity.
  - You are showing civic responsibility, maturity and a sense of community pride by donating blood.

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## What Should I Do To Prepare?

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- ◆ **Sleep**
  - Get at least eight hours of sleep the night before your donation.
- ◆ **Eat**
  - Eat a healthy breakfast or lunch - or both if your appointment is later in the day.
  - Don't skip meals on the day of a donation.
  - Make healthy food choices. Eat proteins (lean meat, cheese, and yogurt) or complex carbohydrates (bread, cereal, and fruit).
  - Include iron-rich foods in your regular diet (red meat, fish, poultry, beans, iron-fortified cereals, and raisins).
- ◆ **Drink**
  - Drink a few extra glasses of water or fluids in the days before you donate.
  - Start the day with a bottle of water or a glass of orange juice. It is a good idea to bring water with you and to start to drink it right after you register or while waiting to donate.

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## During Donation

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Most people sit back and relax during donation and feel fine afterwards. You may try a simple technique to tense and relax the muscles in your legs, during the donation so that you may be less likely to have a reaction:

- Lift your legs (one at a time) off the donor bed.
- Hold for a few seconds, and then repeat.
- Breathe normally.

At anytime if you become dizzy or lightheaded, stop what you are doing and sit or lie down until you feel better.

***Tell staff immediately what you are experiencing and they will take care of you.***

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## After Donation

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- ◆ Be sure to sit and relax in the canteen or recovery area for at least 15 minutes and have a drink and a snack.
- ◆ Drink a few extra glasses of fluids after donation to stay well hydrated. Most donors have uneventful donations and feel good about donating.
- ◆ Some people may experience lightheadedness, dizziness, or an upset stomach that resolves soon after donation. Less commonly, a donor may faint during or after blood donation.
- ◆ Call the blood center number provided to you after your donation if you have questions or concerns.

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## Strenuous Activity

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- ◆ Student athletes should wait about 12 hours or more to resume strenuous exercise after blood donation, depending on how they feel.
- ◆ You temporarily lose fluid after donation which your body replaces within 24 hours or sooner if you drink extra fluids. As a precaution, do not donate blood on the same day of a competition or strenuous practice.
- ◆ Your body replaces the red blood cells (the cells that deliver oxygen to muscles and tissues) within about 2-4 weeks, depending on nutrition and iron status.
- ◆ High-performance competitive athletes may notice a marginal decrease in exercise tolerance for about 1 week after donation.
- ◆ Plan ahead to best schedule your donation with sports and other activities.
  
- ◆ **You should not give blood if you**
  - Had hepatitis on or after the age of 11
  - Had malaria in the past 3 years
  - Travel or lived in certain countries
  - Were held in a correctional facility (including jail, lock up, prison, or juvenile detention center) for more than 72 straight hours in the last 12 months or was raped in the last 12 months
  - Have had sexual contact in the past 12 months with anyone who is sick with hepatitis or AIDS
  - Had or were treated for syphilis or gonorrhea or tested positive for syphilis in the last 12 months
- ◆ **Have AIDS or have ever had a positive HIV test**
  - AIDS is caused by HIV. HIV is spread mainly through sexual contact with an infected person, or by sharing needles or syringes used for injecting drugs.
- ◆ **Have done something that puts you at risk for becoming infected with HIV**

You are at risk for getting infected if you

  - Have ever used needles to take drugs, steroids, or anything not prescribed by your doctor
  - Are a male who has had sexual contact with another male, even once, since 1977
  - Have ever taken money, drugs, or other payment for sex since 1977
  - Have had sexual contact in the past 12 months with anyone described above
  - Received clotting factor concentrates for a bleeding disorder such as hemophilia
- ◆ **Have any of the following conditions that can be signs or symptoms of HIV/AIDS**
  - Unexplained weight loss (10 pounds or more in less than 2 months)
  - Night sweats
  - Blue or purple spots in your mouth or skin
  - White spots or unusual sores in your mouth
  - Lumps in your neck, armpits, or groin, lasting longer than one month
  - Diarrhea that won't go away

- Cough that won't go away and shortness of breath
- Fever higher than 100.5° F lasting more than 10 days
- ◆ **Ineligible donors**
  - We maintain a confidential list of people who may be at risk for spreading transfusion-transmitted diseases. By continuing this process, you consent to be entered in this confidential list of deferred donors if you are at risk for spreading such diseases. When required, we report donor information, including test results, to health departments, and regulatory agencies. Donation information may also be used confidentially for medical studies.

**Thank you for donating blood today!**  
**908-685-2926**

**Somerset Medical Center  
Blood Donor Program  
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Adapted from ARC "Young Donors Make A Difference" 2008  
Originated: cl 5/2009

# WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW TO DONATE



A Student Guide to Blood Donation