

## The Different Types of Blood Donations

There are a few different kinds of blood donation: whole blood donation takes all the parts of your blood, whereas the other types of donation each take a part of your blood. Whole blood donation collects blood so that it can either be used as a whole blood transfusion or separated into its different parts (red cells, white cells, platelets, and plasma) to benefit multiple people. Donated blood is called a “blood product.” Each kind of blood product is needed and has a limited shelf life. This is why it is so important to give blood several times a year, or more often, if you can.

- **Whole blood donation** collects blood so that it can either be used as a whole blood transfusion or separated into its different parts (red cells, white cells, platelets, and plasma) to benefit multiple people. It is the most common type of donation.  
**Shelf life: 42 days**
- **Platelet donation** collects platelets, the tiny cells that help blood clot. A machine separates the blood to collect platelets along with some plasma, then returns the red cells and most of that plasma back to your body.  
**Shelf life: 5-7 days**
- **Double red cell or “power red” donation** collects two units of concentrated red blood cells. This is double the amount of life-saving red blood cells that you can give in a whole blood donation. A machine separates the blood to collect red cells, then returns platelets and plasma back to your body.  
**Shelf life: 42 days**
- **Plasma donation** collects plasma, the liquid portion of blood. A collection device separates the blood to collect plasma, then returns cells and platelets back to your body.  
**Shelf life: 1 year**

There are usually different eligibility requirements for each kind of donation. You can contact a donation center directly to learn more. Help save the lives of people in your community by donating regularly.

### Did you know?

Apheresis is the process of removing a specific component of the blood, including platelets, red blood cells, and plasma. During this process, you give blood through a needle and tube, like you do during a regular blood donation. But, unlike a regular blood donation, the tube is connected to a high-tech machine that separates out a certain part of your blood, then returns the blood and remaining blood components back into your body through the same tube.

Apheresis donation takes longer than a whole blood donation. A whole blood donation takes about 20 minutes, and an apheresis donation can take 1 to 2 hours, depending on the blood component that is being donated.

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Without the  
blood transfusion  
I received,  
I probably wouldn't  
have survived.”

—Cesar