

CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19) UPDATE

The American Red Cross is experiencing a severe blood shortage as the number of trauma cases, organ transplants and elective surgeries rise – and deplete the nation’s blood inventory. The Red Cross is working around the clock to meet the extraordinary blood needs of hospitals and patients but can’t do it alone. **All blood types are needed, particularly type O.**

PANDEMIC UPDATE

As more and more people have become vaccinated and the number of COVID-19 cases are significantly reduced, we have reached an important milestone in the battle against the pandemic. We are so very grateful that our country has reached a point where we can begin to alleviate some of the burdens that COVID-19 has placed on all of us.

The Red Cross has updated its pandemic safety protocols in alignment with CDC and OSHA guidance. Here’s what you need to know:

- Fully vaccinated individuals including staff and blood donors will no longer need to wear face masks or socially distance beginning May 21.
- Unvaccinated individuals will continue to be required to wear face masks and socially distance. We encourage donors to bring their own face mask that covers both their nose and mouth. If a donor does not have a mask, we will provide one. If a donor does not want to wear a mask, we ask they postpone their donation for a later date.
- If your location requires face masks, the Red Cross will adhere to more stringent face mask requirements. Please notify your Red Cross Account Manager at least 72 hours before your next blood drive if face masks will be required.
- In addition, where state and/or local guidance is more stringent than the most recent CDC guidelines, we will follow the more stringent state or local guidelines.
- Proof of vaccination will not be a requirement. We trust that our blood donors will provide honest responses – it’s what our eligibility process is built upon. We will continue to rely on the honesty of our blood donors when it comes to COVID-19 vaccination and face masks.

At each blood drive, Red Cross staff continues to follow the highest standards of safety and infection control. Our commitment to operate blood drives in the safest way possible for our donors, volunteers and staff remains a top priority.

COVID-19 Antibody Testing Program: The Red Cross is testing all blood product donations for COVID-19 antibodies through June 25. As we are phasing out this program, it is possible that some donors who give in days immediately following June 25 may also receive results. The conclusion of Red Cross blood donation antibody testing program is in response to improved public health with increased COVID-19 vaccination rates and decreased demand for convalescent plasma. The nation has now entered a new, hopeful phase as we continue our journey out of this terrible pandemic. For additional information, please visit RedCrossBlood.org/antibodytesting.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- **COVID-19 Vaccine and Blood Donor Eligibility Information:** If your donors receive a COVID-19 vaccine, knowing the name of the manufacturer is important in determining blood donation eligibility. **In most cases, there’s no deferral time.** For additional information, please go to RedCrossBlood.org/covid19.
- **Refreshment (food/drinks) Items at Blood Drives** must be single-serve, individually wrapped packages.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- Schedule appointments for all your donors to help manage donor flow and allow for social distancing for non-vaccinated individuals.
- Inform your donors that guests will not be able to attend drive (e.g. kids or teens, unless teen is donating blood).
- Please instruct your volunteers to connect with the charge person on the day of your blood drive, at their arrival, for any COVID-19 protocol updates and to receive any needed on-site training.
- For additional information go to redcrossblood.org to learn more about coronavirus and blood donation.

Thank you for your steadfast support of our lifesaving mission.