



CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19) UPDATE

Right now, the American Red Cross is facing a national blood crisis – our worst blood shortage in over a decade, posing a concerning risk to patient care. The Red Cross has had less than a one-day supply of critical blood types in recent weeks. We work with hospitals around-the-clock to help meet the needs of patients, but blood product distributions to hospitals are currently outpacing the number of blood donations coming in. **The situation is dire; we are issuing a plea for full support of our blood program leaders to host drives and eligible donors to make an appointment.**

BLOOD INVENTORY UPDATE

Every community in America needs blood on a daily basis. At a time when many organizations across the country are experiencing pandemic challenges – the Red Cross is no different. And while we are all learning how to live in this new environment, how we spend our time, where we work, how we give back, how we make a difference in the lives of others – hosting blood drives must continue to be part of it.

- There has been about a 10% decline in the number of people donating blood since the pandemic began.
- Additional challenges lie ahead as winter weather, another surge of COVID-19 cases and what is expected to be an active flu season may compound the dire situation the nation currently faces.

PANDEMIC UPDATE

While the pandemic continues to weigh heavily on people's lives, the Red Cross asks the public to remember that **hosting blood drives and donating blood is essential to help save the lives of patients.** As you continue to plan for your upcoming blood drive, here's what you need to know:

- Our commitment to operate blood drives in the safest way possible for our donors, volunteers and staff remains a top priority. We will continue to follow [the highest standards of safety and infection control](#).
- **All individuals at blood drives must wear a face mask regardless of vaccination status.**
- COVID-19 Vaccine and Blood Donor Eligibility Information: Donors may still donate after receiving a COVID-19 vaccine, knowing the name of the manufacturer is critical in determining blood donation eligibility. For additional information, please go to [RedCrossBlood.org/covid19](https://www.redcrossblood.org/covid19).
- Refreshment (food/drinks) items at blood drives must be single-serve, individually wrapped packages.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

With this unfortunate turn in the pandemic, your blood drive leadership to support these mitigation measure to help ensure safety at your upcoming blood drives is greatly appreciated.

- Schedule appointments for all your donors to help manage donor flow and allow for social distancing.
- Spread the word. Ask donors, volunteers, friends and colleagues to share [information from the Partner Online Guides](#) in their social media networks about your blood drive. Every touchpoint helps.
- Make your donors and volunteers aware that all individuals will need to continue wearing face masks regardless of their vaccination status. Valve face masks are not permitted. Face shields can be worn in addition to face masks but not as a substitute. If a donor needs a face mask, one can be provided to them at the drive.
- Inform your donors that guests will not be able to attend drive (e.g. kids or teens, unless teen is donating).
- Recruit volunteers for your blood drive – volunteers play an important role by greeting, registering, answering questions and providing information to blood donors throughout the donation process.
- 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](https://www.redcrossblood.org) to learn more about coronavirus and blood donation.

Thank you for your steadfast support of our lifesaving mission.