

# CDC Encourages Donating Blood If You Are Well

In healthcare settings all across the United States, donated blood is a lifesaving, essential part of caring for patients. The need for donated blood is constant, and blood centers are open and in urgent need of donations. CDC encourages people who are well to continue to donate blood if they are able, even if they are practicing social distancing because of COVID-19. CDC is supporting blood centers by providing recommendations that will keep donors and staff safe. Examples of these recommendations include spacing donor chairs 6 feet apart, thoroughly adhering to environmental cleaning practices, and encouraging donors to make donation appointments ahead of time.

*CDC works 24/7 protecting America's health, safety and security. Whether disease start at home or abroad, are curable or preventable, chronic or acute, or from human activity or deliberate attack, CDC responds to America's most pressing health threats. CDC is headquartered in Atlanta and has experts located throughout the United States and the world.*

As we make adjustments in our professional and personal lives to cope with the rapidly evolving virus outbreak, many are feeling anxious or helpless. One area of crucial importance, and which many can play an active role in reversing, is ensuring a sufficient supply of blood. The American Red Cross which collects 40% of the nation's blood is currently facing a severe blood shortage. As for March 16, the Coronavirus pandemic has resulted in the cancellation of almost 2,700 blood drives which equates to 86,000 units of UNCOLLECTED blood! Sadly, given that 80% of blood drives are held at universities, high schools, office buildings and places of worship at this time of year, most of which are now closed or closing to allow for social distancing, the severity of the situation is likely to get worse before it gets better. Donating blood is a safe procedure and the Red Cross is implementing measures to replace cancelled drives as quickly as possible, and ensuring all blood drives follow enhanced sanitation guidelines outlined by public health officials to ensure the health and safety of both donors and staff. These include:

- Checking the temperature of staff and donors *before* entering a drive to make sure they are healthy.
- Providing hand sanitizer for use before the drive, as well as throughout the donation process.

- Spacing beds, where possible, to follow social distancing practices between blood donors.
- Increasing enhanced disinfecting of surfaces and equipment.

These measures have been implemented in addition to regular safety protocols to help prevent the spread of infections, such as, wearing gloves and changing gloves often, routinely wiping down donor-touched areas, using sterile collection sets for every donation, and preparing the arm for donation with an aseptic scrub.

While the blood supply shrinks, the need for blood continues. Cancer patients, accident and trauma victims, and many others facing chronic health conditions that require lifesaving transfusions depend on healthy donors to give the gift of life. It is a simple, safe and powerful action that we can take to help our communities and our nation during this unprecedented crisis.

If you are healthy and eligible to donate blood, please visit [RedCrossBlood.org](https://www.redcrossblood.org) to make your appointment now and please share the need with family, friends and colleagues.

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Finger Lakes Chapter