

# Is Finding My Own **Blood** Donors a Good Idea?

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Only you, your family and your physician can make this decision, but here are some things to consider:

## **PROS**

- You may have additional peace of mind as you face surgery.
- In case of a severe blood shortage, you would have some blood stored.

## **CONS**

- The community blood supply is safer than ever. Nucleic acid testing, conducted since 1999, has reduced the possibility of contracting HIV from a blood transfusion to 1 in 1.9 million and the risk of contracting Hepatitis C to 1 in 1.6 million.<sup>1</sup> By contrast, the risk of dying from anesthesia is 1 in 250,000.<sup>2</sup>
- Intraoperative blood salvage is increasingly a good alternative to self donation or finding your own donors. In this procedure, your own blood lost during surgery is captured and returned to you. Discuss this option with your doctor.
- There is no medical evidence that blood from donors selected by the patient is safer than that from volunteer donors. In fact, it may be less safe because donors known to the patient may not reveal embarrassing information about their personal history, assuming that blood tests will detect any infection. Since tests do not always detect viruses, blood donated by someone whose recent behavior put them at risk of HIV or other viruses could pass the screening measure and transmit disease to a patient.

The decision is yours, but because the CONS outweigh the PROS, fewer and fewer insurance companies are willing to reimburse hospitals (which then reimburse blood centers) for "patient-selected" donations.

***Each donor you send to the Virginia Blood Services to give blood for you will be required to pay \$150 for the portion of our services-- including medical screening, blood collection, labeling and storage procedures-- that are different from and more complex than what is required for the community blood supply. VISA, MasterCard, cash, checks and cashier's checks will be accepted. Medicare and Medicaid do not reimburse these fees. Your family and friends may expect you to reimburse them.***

Your doctor must write a prescription for these donations and each donor must make an appointment at least one week ahead of your surgery. You must provide Virginia Blood Services with your blood type and a list of your selected donors that includes their blood types.

<sup>1</sup> Finucane ML, Slovic P, Mertz CK. Public perception of the risk of blood transfusion. *Transfusion* 2000;40:1017-22

<sup>2</sup> According to a 1999 report by the American Society of Anesthesiologists

**Virginia Blood Services Locations**  
*Where You May Donate Blood for Yourself*

**RICHMOND:**

2111-B North Hamilton Street, 23230  
(804) 213-4150  
FAX (804) 355-2813  
By appointment

4211 Old Hundred Road  
Chester, VA 23811  
(804) 342-4040  
FAX (804) 748-7990

**CHARLOTTESVILLE:**

2401 Hydraulic Road, 22901  
1-888-977-8956  
FAX (434) 979-4860  
By appointment

**FISHERSVILLE:**

Augusta Medical Center  
96 Medical Center Drive  
Fishersville, VA 22939  
(540) 932-4526  
FAX (540) 332-4709  
By appointment

**HARRISONBURG:**

RMH Blood Center  
RMH Outpatient Center  
100 E. Grace Street, 22801-3293  
(540) 433-4298  
FAX (540) 437-8383  
By appointment



**2201 Westwood Avenue**  
**Richmond, VA 23230**