

# Someone's *life* depends on *YOU*.

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## Questions and answers about platelet donation

### What are platelets, and what are they used for?

- Platelets are the clotting component of blood, and survive only five days after donation.
- Platelets primarily are used for patients who have cancer or other life threatening diseases and require multiple transfusions of platelets to keep them alive.

### How is platelet donation different from whole blood donation?

- During a platelet donation, a donor's blood is drawn and processed in a cell separator. This cell separator extracts platelets and returns the remainder of the blood back to the donor.

### How long will this donation take?

- Once we determine your platelet count, your donation will take about 90 minutes.

### Is this type of donation safe?

- Just like with a whole blood donation, there is no risk of contracting any disease by donating platelets.

### Can I get someone else's blood with this procedure?

- No, as with whole blood donations, each donation is performed using a sterile, individual-use, disposable kit. This disposable kit fits in the cell separator and is only used once. After the procedure, the kit is thrown away.
- Your blood only comes in contact with the sterile, individual-use disposable kit. You cannot get a disease from donating this way.

### Why should I donate this way instead of giving whole blood?

- You may be more comfortable donating platelets than with any other blood donation because this procedure uses a smaller needle.

- You will be able to help special patients in our community who urgently need platelet transfusions from as few donors as possible.
- It takes four to six whole blood donors to provide as many platelets as one platelet donor can give.

### **Where are automated donations available?**

- A number of blood centers across the country have begun offering platelet donation at businesses, schools and churches, as well as in donor centers. Using this state-of-the-art technology puts Virginia Blood Services at the forefront of transfusion medicine.

### **Can I work after donating?**

- As long as your work does not involve heavy lifting or strenuous activity; there should not be any problem with routine work.

### **What are the requirements to donate platelets?**

- Donors must be in good health, weigh 110 pounds, be 16 years old and have a minimum hemoglobin of 12.5. Written parental consent is required for 16-year-old donors.
- Donors must not take aspirin 48 hours prior to a platelet donation.

### **How often can I donate?**

- You are eligible to donate platelets every 14 days.

### **Is the screening process different from that of the screening process for whole blood donors?**

- No. The medical review is the same for both.

### **Who should I contact if I am interested in donating or I have questions?**

- Jenny Madden at (804) 213-4212, (800) 989-4438 ext. 4212 or [jmadden@vablood.org](mailto:jmadden@vablood.org)
- Katie Miller at (804) 213-4219, (800) 989-4438 ext. 4219 or [kmiller@vablood.org](mailto:kmiller@vablood.org)