

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

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
- Katie Miller at (804) 213-4219, (800) 989-4438 ext. 4219 or kmiller@vablood.org