

Give Blood, Get A Free COVID-19 Antibody Test

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COLLINSVILLE — Congressman John Shimkus (R, Illinois-15) is urging constituents to help meet the nation's urgent need for blood and platelets. For a limited time, the American Red Cross will also test all blood, platelet and plasma donations for COVID-19 antibodies at no cost to donors.

Congressman Shimkus donated blood in Belleville last week.

"With many previously scheduled blood drives cancelled due to the pandemic, the Red Cross continues to face a shortage of blood," Shimkus said. "Donating blood is a safe process and people should not hesitate to give or receive blood."

While donations are needed nationwide, Shimkus specifically called on constituents in the Effingham area to consider donating blood.

"Effingham is home to the Red Cross fixed site with the highest percentage of donations of O negative blood in the country," the congressman explained. "O negative is known as the Universal Blood type because it can be used in blood transfusions for any blood type."

Potential donors can use the Red Cross Blood Donor mobile app to schedule an appointment, or call 1-800-733-2767. The app is available from the Apple or Google Play app stores.

Background from the American Red Cross:

The Red Cross tests every blood donation for a variety of illnesses. Adding this antibody test is the latest part of our longtime commitment to health. If you donate blood, platelets or plasma on or after June 15, 2020 your donation will be tested for COVID-19 antibodies.

What is the Antibody Test?

An antibody test screens for antibodies in your blood, which are formed when fighting an infection, like COVID-19. An antibody test assesses whether your immune system has responded to the infection, not if the virus is currently present. The COVID-19 antibody test is authorized by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and may indicate if the donor's immune system has produced antibodies to the coronavirus, regardless of whether they developed symptoms.

>Please note the Red Cross is not testing donors to diagnose illness, including COVID-19. If you feel unwell for any reason, please postpone your donation. Individuals who believe they may be ill with COVID-19 should not present to donate until they are symptom free for 28 days and feeling well and healthy.