

Flu Vaccine, Blood Donation Both Help Save Lives

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ST LOUIS — The American Red Cross is urging healthy donors of all blood types to [give blood](#) or [platelets](#) to ensure a strong blood supply for patients as the U.S. braces for flu season while in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Flu shot doesn't affect blood donation eligibility

Medical experts are urging people to get the flu shot to avoid a flu epidemic on top of the current COVID-19 pandemic. Because blood can only be given by those who are feeling well, a severe flu season could create additional challenges to maintaining a sufficient blood supply for hospital patients in need.

Get the flu vaccine this year to help protect the nation from the virus but also to ensure that patients continue to have access to lifesaving blood products. There is no waiting period to give blood or platelets after receiving a flu shot as long as the donor is symptom-free and fever-free. There is no risk of transmitting the influenza virus after receiving a flu vaccination.

For those that have the flu, it is important to wait until they no longer exhibit flu symptoms, have recovered completely and feel well before attempting to donate. Donors must feel healthy and well on the day of donation.

[Stay healthy this flu season](#) and make an appointment to donate blood by downloading the Red Cross Blood Donor App, visiting [RedCrossBlood.org](https://www.redcrossblood.org), calling 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or enabling the Blood Donor Skill on any Alexa Echo device.

In thanks for making time to donate, the Red Cross will send those who come to give Oct. 15-Nov. 11 a \$5 Amazon.com Gift Card via email, courtesy of Suburban Propane. Plus, those who come to give in October are automatically entered for a chance to win a \$1,000 Amazon.com Gift Card. Five lucky people will win. (Restrictions apply. Additional information and details are available at [RedCrossBlood.org/Unite](https://www.redcrossblood.org/Unite).)

Important COVID-19 information for donors

The Red Cross is testing blood, platelet and plasma donations for COVID-19 antibodies. The test may indicate if the donor's immune system has produced antibodies to this coronavirus, regardless of whether an individual developed COVID-19 symptoms. Red Cross antibody tests will be helpful to identify individuals who have COVID-19 antibodies and may now help current coronavirus patients in need of convalescent plasma transfusions. Convalescent plasma is a type of blood donation collected from COVID-19 survivors that have antibodies that may help patients who are actively fighting the virus.