

Blood Donations Needed As Cancer Patients Resume Care After Challenging Year

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ST. LOUIS, Mo. (June 1, 2021) – The American Red Cross and the American Cancer Society have teamed up this June to encourage people across the country to [Give Blood to Give Time](#) and help ensure loved ones have the strength and support they need as they undergo cancer treatment.

According to the American Cancer Society, many patient visits and procedures were forced to delay or cancel early in the pandemic to reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19. With procedures resuming, blood donations are critical for cancer treatments. Unfortunately, the Red Cross is seeing fewer blood and platelet donors give as the nation begins to climb out of this pandemic. This downturn comes at a time when the Red Cross continues to see strong demand for blood products including platelets by hospitals, causing concern for the sufficiency of the blood supply this month and throughout the summer.

The Red Cross currently has an emergency need for eligible donors in the area to make an appointment now to give platelets to ensure critical patient needs are met. Platelets, the clotting portion of blood primarily given to cancer patients during treatment, must be transfused within five days of donation and, therefore, are always in great demand.

“Many cancer patients, especially those going through chemotherapy, will have a need for blood products during treatment,” said Dr. Baia Lasky, medical director for the Red Cross. “When someone donates blood or platelets, they may not only help prevent life-threatening bleeding that can cause stroke or relieve some symptoms, like shortness of breath and headaches, but also give patients and their families the time and hope they need to fight back.”

Some types of chemotherapy can damage bone marrow, reducing red blood cell and platelet production. Other times, the cancer itself or surgical procedures cause the need for blood products. About six blood products are needed every minute to help someone going through cancer treatment. Yet only 3% of people in the U.S. give blood. It is vital that more people donate blood and platelets regularly to meet that need.

To schedule a blood or platelet donation appointment, visit [GiveBloodToGiveTime.org](https://www.giveblood.org). As a special thank-you, those who come to donate through June 13 will receive a limited-edition Red Cross T-shirt, while supplies last.

“The need for blood in cancer treatments is an important and untold story,” said Howard Byck, senior vice president of corporate and sports alliances, American Cancer Society. “The American Cancer Society is excited to be working with the Red Cross on *Give Blood to Give Time*. Through this partnership, we want people to know there are multiple ways they can help and make a meaningful difference in the lives of patients and their families.”

Cancer takes so much, but you can help