

# **Flu Season Could Further Impact Ongoing Red Cross Blood Shortage - Emergency Blood Shortage Continues**

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ST. LOUIS – As the holidays approach and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention warns about a potential spike in flu cases this year, it's important that those who are eligible, healthy, and feeling well make an appointment to donate blood or

platelets. The American Red Cross continues to address an ongoing emergency blood shortage, and donors are urged to give now to combat the lowest blood supply levels at this time of year in more than a decade.

According to the CDC, flu cases reached an all-time low last year due to masking, physical distancing, and shutdowns across the country, and many Americans may have reduced immunity this year. When seasonal illness increases, the number of healthy blood donors tends to decrease. Paired with winter weather, busy holiday schedules, and ongoing COVID-19 concerns, the already-struggling blood supply could be further impacted throughout winter.

There is no blood donation waiting period for those who have received a flu shot or a Moderna, Pfizer, or Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine or booster, so long as they are symptom-free. Donors are urged to schedule an appointment now by using the Red Cross Blood Donor App, visiting [RedCrossBlood.org](https://www.redcrossblood.org), or calling 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767).

To encourage donors to help meet the needs of hospital patients this month, all who come to donate Nov. 1-23 will receive a \$10 Amazon.com Gift Card by email, thanks to Amazon.\* Those who come to give around the Thanksgiving holiday, Nov. 24-28, will receive a pair of Red Cross socks, while supplies last.

### **Blood drive safety**

Each Red Cross blood drive and donation center follows the highest standards of safety and infection control, and additional precautions – including face masks for donors and staff, regardless of vaccination status – have been implemented to help protect the health of all those in attendance. Donors are asked to schedule an appointment prior to arriving at the drive.

[Click HERE for upcoming blood donation opportunities Nov. 16-30](#)

### **Save time during a donation**

Donors can also save up to 15 minutes at the blood drive by completing a RapidPass®. With RapidPass®, donors complete the pre-donation reading and health history questionnaire online, on the day of donation, from a mobile device or computer. To complete a RapidPass®, follow the instructions at [RedCrossBlood.org/RapidPass](https://www.redcrossblood.org/RapidPass) or use the Red Cross Blood Donor App.

To donate blood, individuals need to bring a blood donor card or driver's license or two other forms of identification that are required at check-in. Individuals who are 17 years

of age in most states (16 with parental consent where allowed by state law), weigh at least 110 pounds and are in generally good health may be eligible to donate blood. High school students and other donors 18 years of age and younger also must meet certain height and weight requirements.

## **Health insights for donors**

At a time when health information has never been more important, the Red Cross is screening all blood, platelet and plasma donations from self-identified African American donors for the sickle cell trait. This additional screening will provide Black donors with an additional health insight and help the Red Cross identify compatible blood types more quickly to help patients with sickle cell disease who require trait-negative blood. Blood transfusion is an essential treatment for those with sickle cell disease, and blood donations from individuals of the same race, ethnicity and blood type have a unique ability to help patients fighting sickle cell disease.

Donors can expect to receive sickle cell trait screening results, if applicable, within one to two weeks through the Red Cross Blood Donor App and the online donor portal at [RedCrossBlood.org](http://RedCrossBlood.org).

## **About the American Red Cross**

The American Red Cross shelters, feeds and provides comfort to victims of disasters; supplies about 40% of the nation's blood; teaches skills that save lives; distributes international humanitarian aid; and supports veterans, military members and their families. The Red Cross is a not-for-profit organization that depends on volunteers and the generosity of the American public to deliver its mission. For more information, please visit [redcross.org](http://redcross.org) or [cruzrojaamericana.org](http://cruzrojaamericana.org), or visit us on Twitter at [@RedCross](https://twitter.com/RedCross).