

# Red Cross: Help Avoid Impact To Patients Over Holidays

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**ST. LOUIS** — As many prepare to celebrate Thanksgiving and look ahead at a busy holiday season, the American Red Cross encourages eligible donors across the country to harness their humanity by giving blood or platelets in the coming weeks.

In the St. Louis area, you can give the perfect gift – the gift of life – by donating blood the day after Thanksgiving on Friday, Nov. 26 at the 12th annual JOY FM/Boost Radio

Perfect Gift Blood Drive. The drive will go from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at three locations in the Greater St. Louis area, and one location in Southwestern Illinois.

Rather than shop for deals on the busiest Friday of the year, Mike and Diana Hopkins spend family time every year driving an hour each way the day after Thanksgiving to donate blood at this drive. This year they will be joined by two of their six children, sons Lucas and Zach, who will donate with them at West Hills Church in Town and Country.

"It's a way to give back," said Mike (pictured at the far right – red cap). "I think a lot of times when we go shopping it's for things that people want, but this something that obviously people need, so we feel privileged to be able to provide that.

As a result of low blood donor turnout in recent months, the Red Cross is heading into the holidays with its lowest blood supply in more than a decade at this time of year. The ongoing effects of COVID-19 and a summer spike in delta variant cases significantly challenged the nation's blood supply heading into the fall. The pandemic also resulted in fewer blood drives at schools and colleges, contributing to a 34% drop in new blood donors from last year one of the largest year-to-year decreases and one that could threaten essential medical care for patients. Locally, the Missouri-Arkansas Red Cross Region has experienced a 13.4% decrease in new blood donors this year.

Don't wait. Humanity needs you to help patients enjoy all the holiday season has to offer. Make an appointment to give blood or platelets as soon as possible by using the Red Cross Blood Donor App, visiting [RedCrossBlood.org](https://RedCrossBlood.org) or calling 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767).

As a thank-you, all those who come to give Nov. 29-Dec. 16 will be automatically entered for a chance to win a private screening for the winner and 50 of their guests of the epic new film *The Matrix Resurrections*. Plus, those who come to give Nov. 29-Dec. 16 will also get a \$10 Amazon.com Gift Card by email, thanks to Amazon.\*

Those who share the warmth and make a blood or platelet donation part of their Thanksgiving plans Nov. 24-28 will receive an exclusive pair of Red Cross holiday socks, while supplies last.

To make an appointment at the Perfect Gift blood drive, simply download the American Red Cross Blood Donor App, visit [RedCrossBlood.org](https://RedCrossBlood.org) and use sponsor code: joyfm /boost, or call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or enable the Blood Donor Skill on any Alexa Echo device.