



Severe Winter Weather Intensifies Red Cross Blood Crisis

February 14 2022 11:10 AM



ST. LOUIS - After severe winter storms rolled across the country, the American Red Cross asks members of the community to schedule the earliest-available blood or platelet donation appointments in their area once it is safe to give.

Dangerous snow and ice conditions have contributed to about 600 blood drive cancellations since the beginning of the year, resulting in nearly 17,500 uncollected blood and platelet donations. In the Missouri-Arkansas Region, 46 blood drives were canceled, and 11 donor centers were closed, resulting in 1,707 uncollected donations due to recent winter storms.

Since the Red Cross issued its first-ever blood crisis in January, thousands of generous donors have come forward to give, but patient care remains at risk. The threat of winter weather continues as well as ongoing complications posed by the omicron variant – and could further complicate efforts to rebuild the blood supply.

More donors are needed to make appointments now for the weeks ahead to help ensure accident victims, cancer patients and new mothers experiencing complicated childbirths have access to lifesaving blood product transfusions without delay. Make an appointment to give blood or platelets 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)**.

All who come to give blood or platelets Feb. 1-28, 2022, will receive a \$10 Amazon.com Gift Card by email, thanks to Amazon.*

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. 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](https://www.RedCrossBlood.org).

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.

How to donate blood

Simply download the American Red Cross Blood Donor App, visit [RedCrossBlood.org](https://www.redcrossblood.org), call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or enable the Blood Donor Skill on any Alexa Echo device to make an appointment or for more information. All blood types are needed to ensure a reliable supply for patients. A blood donor card or driver's license or two other forms of identification 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 have to meet certain height and weight requirements.

Blood and platelet donors can save time at their next donation by using RapidPass[®] to complete their pre-donation reading and health history questionnaire online, on the day of their donation, before arriving at the blood drive. To get started, follow the instructions at [RedCrossBlood.org/RapidPass](https://www.redcrossblood.org/RapidPass) or use the Blood Donor App.

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 nonprofit organization that depends on volunteers and the generosity of the American public to deliver its mission. For more information, please visit [redcross.org](https://www.redcross.org) or [CruzRojaAmericana.org](https://www.CruzRojaAmericana.org), or visit us on Twitter at [@RedCross](https://twitter.com/RedCross).

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