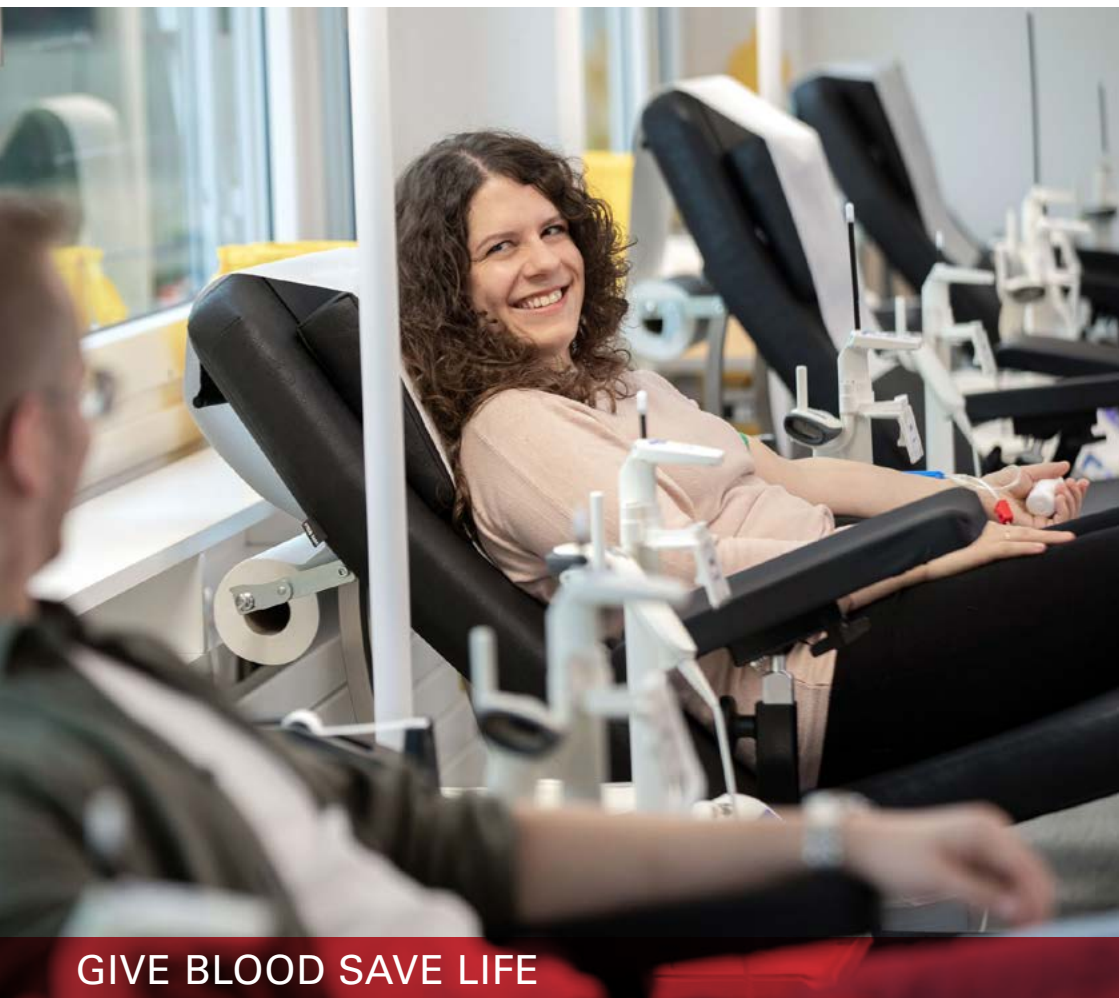


Donating blood: what you should know



GIVE BLOOD SAVE LIFE



BLUTSPENDE SRK SCHWEIZ
TRANSFUSION CRS SUISSE
TRASFUSIONE CRS SVIZZERA

Who we are

Swiss Transfusion SRC is an institution within the Swiss Red Cross. It works with the regional blood transfusion services to secure the blood supply in Switzerland.

The 10 regional blood transfusion services are responsible for procuring and processing blood and supplying hospitals and doctors with the appropriate blood products within their region. Blood can be donated at permanent blood donation centres and during mobile blood drives.

Blood donations are always voluntary and never remunerated

Voluntary donors secure the blood supply in Switzerland and demonstrate their solidarity with patients by donating blood.

Donating blood is never remunerated and donors do not receive any financial compensation. This is a crucial safety factor, because if people don't earn anything from donating blood, they have no incentive to conceal information when filling out the questionnaire.

What's more, encouraging people in financial distress to donate blood by offering them money is ethically questionable.

Why donating blood is so important

Nobody has been able to produce artificial blood yet. But we need blood when accidents happen, to treat cancer and leukaemia, and for operations. Even the best medical care cannot do without blood donations.

Blood donations are needed every day to provide sick and injured people with vital blood products. In Switzerland, an average of around 700 blood donations per day are needed to treat cancer patients, accident victims and people with blood disorders. However, only 2.5% of the population in Switzerland donate blood on a regular basis.

Questions about donating blood

People who are about to donate blood for the first time often have questions: Can I donate at all? How does blood donation work? What do I need to bear in mind? This brochure contains the most important information about donating blood:

What blood is – Information about blood	p. 4
Who can donate blood – eligibility criteria	p. 8
All about donating – the blood donation process	p. 10
Contact – dates and addresses	p. 18

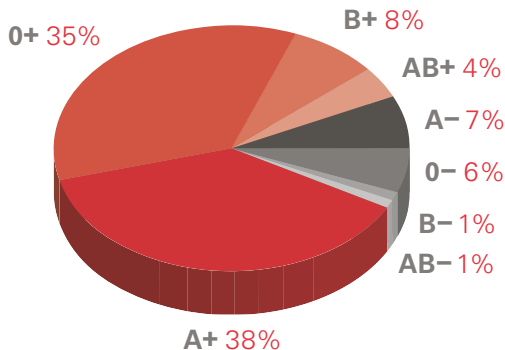
What does blood do and what is it made of?

Blood supplies our body with oxygen, nutrients and energy. It cleanses the body, closes wounds in case of injury and protects against infections. Blood is made up of 45% blood cells and 55% plasma. A distinction is made between red blood cells, which transport oxygen, and white blood cells, which, among other things, fight off pathogens. A third type of cell are blood platelets. These are very important for blood coagulation.

What are blood groups?

Everyone has their own inherited blood type. Biochemical markers on the surface of red blood cells and antibodies determine which of the four blood groups (O, A, B or AB) a person has. Another feature used to differentiate blood groups is the Rhesus factor. People with a positive Rhesus factor have the D antigen in their blood, while those with a negative Rhesus factor lack the D antigen.

Blood groups distribution in Switzerland

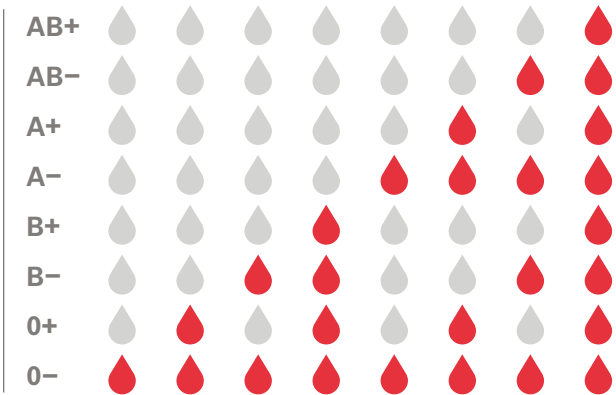


What is blood group compatibility?

A patient receiving the wrong type of blood during a transfusion experiences adverse effects caused by blood group incompatibility. It is therefore essential that both the blood groups and the Rhesus factor of the donor and the recipient are taken into account during a transfusion.

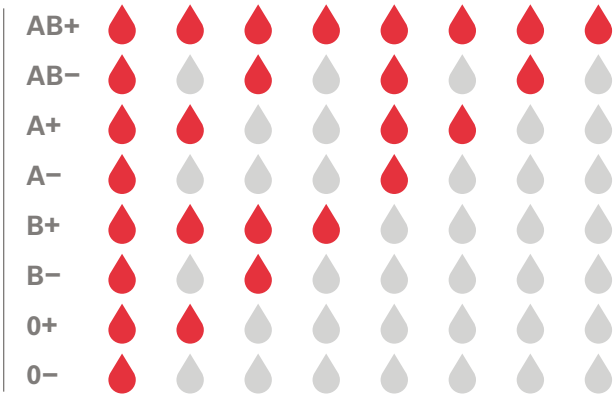
Who does my blood group help?

I can **receive** donations from the following blood groups



My blood group:	0-	0+	B-	B+	A-	A+	AB-	AB+
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I can **donate** blood for patients who have the following blood groups



Donors with blood group 0- are considered universal donors, as they can donate to anyone.

A portrait of Dr. med. Soraya Amar, a woman with long, wavy brown hair and glasses, wearing a white lab coat. She is holding a rolled-up document in her left hand. The background is a blurred office setting with large windows.

«Patients depend on blood donations in the event of accidents, operations or illnesses such as cancer.»

Dr. med. Soraya Amar, Chief Medical Officer
Blood Transfusion Service, Swiss Transfusion SRC AG.

Blood demand in Switzerland

Under normal circumstances, the blood supply in Switzerland is secure. Nevertheless, bottlenecks can sometimes occur, for example in summertime when a lot of people are away on holiday and cannot donate straight away upon their return due to the required waiting period. In addition, blood cannot be kept for indefinite periods.

That's why the procurement of this valuable substance needs careful planning and must be tailored to demand. Donors are therefore often invited to give blood based on their blood type with the goal of mobilising the right donor at the right time and in the right place.



Key criteria for blood donations

- **Good overall state of health**
- **Age**
Generally, any healthy person between the ages of 18 and 60 who weighs more than 50 kg can donate blood. The age limit for a first-time blood donor is 60 (65 with a doctor's approval).
- **Body weight: at least 50 kg**
No more than 13% of a person's total blood volume may be collected, something that can no longer be guaranteed if the donor weighs less than 50 kg.
- **No major operations and no childbirth in the last twelve months**
Surgery and childbirth can lead to blood loss. The body needs all its reserves to recover as quickly as possible.
- **No risky behaviour: Drugs, new sexual partners**
Certain behaviours increase the risk of transmitting dangerous infectious diseases. This kind of risk has to be taken into account to ensure the safety of blood recipients.
- **The use of certain medications is prohibited**
Please contact your local blood transfusion service for further details (p. 19).

Direct link to the
Travel Check tool:
[blooddonation.ch/
travelcheck](http://blooddonation.ch/travelcheck)



- **Waiting periods following stays in countries affected by certain infectious diseases**
In many countries, there is an increased risk of contracting infectious diseases such as malaria, West Nile virus or dengue fever. In order to minimise the risk of their transmission to blood recipients, returning travellers have to wait for a certain period before donating, depending on the country and the type of infection. Donors can enter their destination or country, along with their departure and return dates, into the Travel Check tool, and will immediately see whether and how long any waiting period applies.
- **No tattoos or piercings within the last four months**
Tattoos and piercings cause minor injuries. These can act as entry points for bacteria and viruses. A four-month waiting period applies to rule out the possibility of any inflammation or infection.

Full details can be found in the sample information sheet and sample questionnaire at www.blooddonation.ch or on the websites of the regional blood transfusion services (p. 19).

What should you bear in mind before donating?

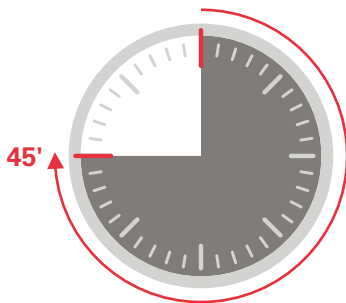
Do not donate blood on an empty stomach. This is why it is very important to eat a light meal and drink plenty of fluids before giving blood.

How does donating blood work?

Once you have registered, you will be asked to fill in a questionnaire, after which a medical professional will discuss it with you. Your blood pressure and pulse will then be measured and the level of haemoglobin in your blood will be checked. The actual blood donation (collection) process only takes about ten minutes. After a short break, refreshments will be served to restore your energy. The overall blood donation process takes an average of around 45 minutes.

You should plan about an hour for your first donation, as your personal details will also be recorded.

Time needed: a total of 45 minutes



- ① Registration
- ② Questionnaire
- ③ Face-to-face talk
- ④ Actual blood donation
- ⑤ Rest period and refreshments

Why the questionnaire?

The questionnaire filled out immediately before each blood donation is used to reassess the donor's current state of health. This is essential to ensure the safety of both the donor and the recipient of the blood products.



Why is the haemoglobin level checked?

Haemoglobin, the pigment in red blood cells, transports oxygen from the lungs to the tissues and releases it to the body's cells. Carbon dioxide from the cells is also bound to haemoglobin and then transported back to the lungs. If your haemoglobin level is too low, you cannot donate blood. Because men generally have higher haemoglobin levels than women, there are different minimum thresholds for eligibility to donate blood for men and women.

Does it hurt to donate blood?

The most unpleasant part of giving blood, if anything, is the slight prick in the finger. The drop of blood taken during this procedure is used to measure the haemoglobin level. You will hardly feel it when the needle enters your vein, and the actual blood collection is completely painless.

How much blood is collected?

An adult weighing over 50 kg has approximately four to six litres of blood, of which 450 ml is collected.

Apheresis donation

Apart from regular blood donation, also known as whole blood donation, there is also something called apheresis donation. In this form of donation, only certain components of the blood are collected from the donor. A machine separates the blood into its various components, and the components that are not needed are returned to the donor during the same procedure. This process takes between one and one and a half hours. Platelet concentrates, plasma and double red cell concentrates are obtained from apheresis donations.



A portrait of Linda Janka, a woman with long brown hair, smiling. She is wearing a light grey sweater, a gold necklace, and pearl earrings. The background is a blurred indoor setting with warm lighting.

«I give blood because many people depend on it and it's a way for me to help them.»

Linda Janka, donates blood regularly.

What should you bear in mind after donating?

The fluid loss caused by blood donation is replenished within 24 hours. During this phase, it is important to drink plenty of fluids and avoid any strenuous activity.

Can I drive after giving blood?

If you feel well enough, you can drive again after resting for at least 30 minutes. However, a break of at least twelve hours is required before driving locomotives or buses, and a break of 48 hours before piloting an aircraft.

Will donating blood affect my performance in sports?

You should avoid competitive sport for two days after giving blood; we also advise against diving. When it comes to other sports, you should be mindful of how your body feels and adjust the duration and intensity accordingly.

How long does it take for the body to replace blood?

It only takes a few days before the white blood cells (leukocytes) are replenished. Thrombocytes (blood platelets) also take a few days. Blood plasma is also rapidly replenished. It takes about two months for new red blood cells to form.

How often can I donate blood?

Provided they are in good health, men can give blood four times and women three times a year.

What happens to the blood that is collected?

Generally, a blood donation is processed into red cell concentrate and plasma. In some cases, the platelets are also separated out and platelets from several blood donations are combined to make what is known as platelet concentrate. The advantage of this is that the products derived from a single blood donation can help several patients, who receive only the blood components they actually need.





«I am eternally grateful to the blood donors who helped keep me alive.»

Tourane Corbière, a mother of three who needed blood transfusions after undergoing intensive chemotherapy.

What will the blood be tested for?

Every blood donation is tested in the laboratory whilst it is being processed. In addition to determining the blood group and Rhesus factor, tests are carried out for infectious agents, such as hepatitis (hepatitis A, B, C and E), HIV and syphilis (TPHA).

Will I be told the results of the blood tests?

New donors will receive a donor card, indicating their blood group and Rhesus factor, a short time after donating blood. If tests do not definitively rule out an infection with hepatitis, HIV or syphilis, a further test will be carried out. If necessary, a doctor will contact the donor concerned.

How long can blood be kept?

The shelf life of blood components differs:

- Blood platelets: 7 days
- Red blood cells: 42–49 days
- Plasma (deep frozen): 2 years

Where and when can I donate blood?

Many towns and villages in Switzerland have blood donation centres run by the regional blood transfusion services. In addition, mobile teams, working with Samaritans' associations and/or groups of volunteers, hold regular blood drives in many other towns and villages.

To find out where and when you can give blood, visit **www.blooddonation.ch/appointments**

Life-saving blood stem cell donation

Blood stem cell donation is less well known than blood donation. But it, too, helps save lives. Children and adults are diagnosed with a life-threatening blood disorder like leukaemia every day in Switzerland. Many of them can be helped by a blood stem cell transplant. However, it is very difficult to find a suitable donor. The more people who register as donors, the greater the chance of being able to help a patient in time.

Registration is open to anyone between the ages of 18 and 40 who meets the eligibility criteria. These include a minimum weight 50 kg. People with hepatitis C, HIV, a history of heart attack or cancer, for example, are not eligible for registration.

For more information and
online registration:
blood-stem-cell-donation.ch



How to contact us

Swiss Transfusion SRC

Waldeggstrasse 51
3097 Liebefeld
Tel. +41 (0)31 380 81 81
info@blutspende.ch
www.blooddonation.ch



Regional Blood Transfusion Services

Fribourg

Hôpital cantonal
Chemin des Pensionnats 2–6
1708 Fribourg
Tel. 026 306 28 50

Geneva

Hôpitaux Universitaires
de Genève HUG
Rue Gabrielle-Perret-Gentil 6
1211 Geneva 14
Tel. 022 372 39 01

Grisons

Kantonsspital
Loëstrasse 170
7000 Chur
Tel. 081 353 15 54

Interregional Blood Donation (Bern/Vaud/Wallis)

Headquarters Bern
Murtenstrasse 133
PO Box
3001 Bern
Tel. 0800 148 148

Neuchâtel-Jura

Rue Sophie-Mairet 29
2303 La Chaux-de-Fonds
Tel. 032 967 20 31

North-West Switzerland

Headquarters Basel
Hebelstrasse 10
4031 Basel
Tel. 058 404 01 00

East Switzerland

Rorschacher Strasse 111
9000 St. Gallen
Tel. 071 494 28 11

Italien Switzerland

Via Tesserete 50
6900 Lugano
Tel. 091 960 26 00

Central Switzerland

Maihofstrasse 1
6004 Luzern
Tel. 041 418 70 20

Zurich

Service Centre
Rütistrasse 19
8952 Schlieren
Tel. 058 272 52 52

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