



# Myths *about* donating blood

## **Myth - "You don't want my blood."**

Fact - With less than 10% of the eligible population actually donating blood, we need every able donor to give blood. We perform 13 tests on each unit of blood to ensure that the blood is safe for the recipient.

## **Myth - "I can't give blood because I'm diabetic."**

Fact - Diabetics may donate blood as long as the other medical requirements are met. However, the previous use of bovine-derived insulin (insulin from a cow) will result in deferral from blood donation.

## **Myth - "I can't give blood because I'm scared of needles."**

Fact - It's perfectly normal to feel apprehensive about donating blood for the first time. Donating blood is a momentary discomfort for the donor that can provide a lifetime of difference for the patient.

## **Myth - "I can't give blood because I'm anemic."**

Fact - Your hemoglobin (iron) level will be checked prior to donating blood. As long as levels are normal on the day of donation, you can give blood. We recommend eating meals that are rich in iron leading up to your donation.

## **Myth - "I need my blood."**

Fact - The average adult has approximately 10 pints of blood in his/her body. Your body will replace your

donated red blood cells within 3-4 weeks.

## **Myth - "I can't give blood because I'm on medication."**

Fact - The following medications are the only ones which would prevent you from donating blood: antibiotics\*, blood thinners (such as Coumadin, Heparin, Lovenox, Warfarin), Proscar, Avodart, Jalyn, Propecia, Accutane, Soriatane, Tegison, human-derived growth hormones, bovine insulin, Hepatitis B Immune Globulin, and anyone who has received an unlicensed vaccine, usually associated with research.

*\*Donors who are taking antibiotics are eligible to donate 24 hours after their last dose.*

## **Myth - "I can't donate blood because I had cancer."**

Fact - While some types of cancer such as leukemia and lymphoma (Hodgkins, non-Hodgkins, etc.) will defer a donor permanently, other cancer survivors can donate blood after being in remission for at least one year.

## **Myth - "I can't donate blood because I've been out of the country."**

Fact - Simply traveling outside of the United States will not defer you from donating blood. Temporary restrictions are placed on potential donors who have visited countries with a high risk of malaria. These restrictions change almost yearly, so contact Blood

Assurance to ask about a specific destination.

## **Myth - "I can get paid to donate blood."**

Fact - To protect the safety of the blood supply, our donors are not paid. There are two very distinct divisions of blood banking, according to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. One consists of non-profit regional blood centers like Blood Assurance who supply blood products to area hospitals. They receive reimbursement from the hospitals for the costs incurred in collecting, testing and shipping the blood. The other division consists of for-profit paid plasma collections, in which people receive monetary compensation for their blood. The FDA does not allow these blood collections to be used for human transfusion. They are most often used in the manufacturing of cosmetic and pharmaceutical products.

## **Myth - "I can't donate because I have a tattoo."**

Fact - If you received your tattoo from a licensed tattoo artist in Alabama, North Carolina or Tennessee, you no longer have to wait one year before donating blood. Tattoos received in Georgia still require a one year deferral.

