

Script – Print – Donating Blood and the COVID Vaccine

Giving Blood Takes on Greater Importance during Pandemic

The need for blood donation in this country is always great. According to ImpactLife:

- Every two seconds someone in the U.S. needs blood and or platelets.
- Approximately 36,000 units of red blood cells are needed every day.
- Less than 38 percent of the population is eligible to give blood or platelets and, yet, only 3 % of eligible people donate blood each year.

To make matters worse, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought extraordinary challenges to the country's blood supply. Donor centers have seen a significant decrease in donations due to COVID prevention measures like social distancing, as well as blood drives being canceled or postponed. And hospitals are always in need of type O blood.

"Some of the shortages are due to the lack of mobile units going to the schools," says Brooke Harms, lead blood bank technician for OSF HealthCare. "Schools were always a big thing for first-time donors. Since COVID they're not able to do that as much so that is one of the reasons they're having a shortage."

So now the question – 'of whether a person can safely donate blood after getting a COVID vaccine' is more important than ever. Fortunately, the answer is yes.

"You are allowed to donate blood as long as you've received one of the three approved vaccines in the United States and those three are the Moderna, the Pfizer and the Johnson & Johnson," says Harms.

You can donate as long as you don't have any COVID symptoms and feel well at the time of donation. If you don't know which company manufactured your vaccine, you need to wait two weeks before you can donate blood.

The same rules apply for platelet and plasma donation. Platelets are small cell fragments that form clots to stop bleeding. The platelet donation process takes up to three hours and is usually done separately from a blood drive.

"Platelets and plasma are additional components that can be donated and it's the same as the standard unit of blood," says Harms. "There's not a waiting period as long as you know which manufacturer it is or else there is a two-week waiting period."

And, according to Harms, there's no concern that donating blood will reduce your COVID-19 antibodies. Donors give one pint of blood but your body contains about 10 pints. If you've had the COVID-19 vaccine, your antibody levels won't go down after you give blood, as your body will quickly replenish the antibodies.

If you're thinking about donating blood, there is no added risk of getting COVID-19 from the procedure. Still, it's important to take certain measures to ensure everyone's safety.

Don't donate if you:

- Tested positive for COVID-19 with or without symptoms in the last 14 days
- Had to self-quarantine in the last 14 days
- Had COVID-19 symptoms in the last 14 days
- If you have side effects from the COVID-19 vaccine, wait until they go away.

"The vaccine is a great option if you're healthy enough to receive it and donating as well," says Harms. "If you're healthy enough, it does save lives. Each donation can save multiple lives, especially here we see the usage and the need for it."

In addition to feeling well, donors also need to be at least 16 in most states, weigh at least 110 pounds and wait 56 days after each donation.

To make a donation, please visit [ImpactLife - Donor Portal \(bloodcenter.org\)](https://www.bloodcenter.org/impactlife)