



# Platelets and plasma

## Your guide to blood component donation

Thank you for volunteering to help even more by becoming a component donor. It is important that you understand the donation procedure, so we have created this guide to give you more information.

If there's anything you're not sure of, please ask a member of our team.

## What to expect when you donate platelets and plasma

### 1. Welcome

When you arrive for your donation you will register at the reception desk and we will check your details. Please read our Consent Leaflet - Platelets and Plasma, which explains the importance of blood safety. It is important to read this whenever you attend because advice can change. We want to give you as much information as possible on the risks of donating platelets, plasma and samples for testing, so that you can make an informed choice. Please then complete the Donation Safety Check, which asks about your medical, lifestyle and travel history.

### 2. Health screening

A Donor Carer, who wears a pale blue uniform, will collect you from the waiting area and escort you to the health screening booth. You will be asked to confirm your identity. It is critical that we guarantee an accurate link between you, your Donation Safety Check, and your donation. We must ensure that it's safe for you to donate and that your donation is safe to give to a patient.

You will need to read and sign the Donor Consent. Please read it carefully. This is a legal document that confirms you understand what is involved in donation before you donate. You will receive specific additional information to help with this.

We'll ask some confidential questions based on your completed Donation Safety Check. There is a period of time where tests may not show if someone has been in contact with infection. We trust you will answer these personal questions as fully as possible to ensure your donation is safe to transfuse to a patient.

You may be referred to a Registered Nurse for certain medical queries. Nurses wear a navy blue uniform. An explanation will always be provided if you are unable to donate today. You will be advised when you can next attend.

We take a small sample of your blood to check your haemoglobin (iron) level is within a specific range. We also check your pulse rate and rhythm. If either of these are outside our accepted levels we will tell you when you can next donate and, if necessary, advise you to visit your GP.

Following your health screening we will prepare the required equipment to take your donation and escort you to a donation couch.

### 3. The donation process

Component donation is a safe and simple way of donating specific parts of your blood, ie platelets or plasma. The component packs and sample tubes are labelled with unique donor identification numbers. All the tubing that your blood comes into contact with is sterile, single-use and disposable. There is no risk of catching any infection. A cuff is placed around your arm, your arm will be thoroughly examined to find a suitable vein before being cleaned with an antiseptic sponge containing a chlorhexidine solution and the donation needle inserted. You will see the staff cleaning their hands frequently. Blood samples are taken at this stage for testing.

During the procedure, blood is withdrawn, mixed with anticoagulant to prevent clotting and processed by spinning to separate the blood into the different components. The targeted component is collected and the remaining blood is returned to you, which is why it is safe for you to donate more frequently than with whole blood.

During the return of your blood, air detectors ensure that none of the sterile air present in the collection gets passed into your vein. If a detector identifies air the machine will automatically shut down and can only be restarted when the air has been removed.

Following needle insertion, you should be comfortable during the donation. While you are donating you will be monitored and cared for by qualified staff who are supervised by nurses. If you do experience any discomfort or pain during your donation, please alert a member of staff immediately so we can take appropriate actions. This may include stopping the donation if this is in your best interests. You can read, chat to the staff or relax, and you will be offered refreshments. When the procedure is completed, the needle will be removed and a dressing applied to the venepuncture site. We will explain how to care for your arm.

### 4. Following donation

The shelf life of the platelet and plasma components differs, so to collect the right amount for patient treatment we may ask you to give regularly or just when needed. We will discuss this with you after your first donation.

We hope that you will make another appointment before leaving the Donor Centre or by calling 0300 123 23 23.

**If there's anything you're not sure of, please ask a member of our team.**

**We look forward to welcoming you back soon.**

**Please hand this guide to a member of our team as you leave.**

### NHS Blood and Transplant

NHS Blood and Transplant saves and improves lives by providing a safe, reliable, and efficient supply of blood and associated services to the NHS in England. We are the organ donor organisation for the UK and responsible for matching and allocating donated organs. We rely on thousands of members of the public who voluntarily donate their blood, organs, tissues, and stem cells. Thank you very much for your time and support and although we have advised you not to donate, you may still be able to help patients by encouraging others to become blood donors.

For more information, visit [nhsbt.nhs.uk](https://nhsbt.nhs.uk)

Call **0300 123 23 23**