

# About Platelet Donations

**Instead of donating a pint of whole blood, you can now donate a particular component (e.g. platelets, plasma or red blood cells) or a combination of components that is most needed by patients who match your blood type.**

## What's it like to donate platelets?

A platelet donation feels much the same as a whole blood donation. A small amount of blood is taken from your arm using a new, sterile, single use needle. The blood will then go through the centrifuge to separate your platelets from other blood components. The platelets are collected in a separate bag and the remainder of your blood is returned to you. This cycle is repeated several times to generate the required volume of platelets.

## Who needs my platelets?

**Platelets are essential to normal blood clotting.**

**Platelets are often used to treat:**

- Cancer patients
- Accident victims
- Patients with blood disorders
- Bone marrow transplant patients

## The need for platelets is constant.

Platelets are very fragile, short lived blood cells that must be transfused within 5 days of donation. Weekends and long holidays can place an added strain on the supply of platelets. You can safely donate platelets every 3 days up to 24 times a year.

## Can't you take platelets from my whole blood donation?

Yes. Platelets can be taken from a whole blood donation but when you make a platelet donation using the automated technology you donate six to ten times the amount of platelets than can be obtained from a whole blood donation. A patient needing platelets will require that amount for one treatment. So, instead of six to ten blood donors, it takes just one platelet donor to provide a patient with one treatment of platelets.

## Is it safe to donate platelets?

At all times during the platelet collection process your blood remains inside a sterile tubing system and is never in contact with the equipments used for your platelet donation. All tubing, bags and needle used to collect your platelets are new, sterile and used only once for you. After use, they are destroyed.

## You can donate platelets AND be a whole blood donor too!

You can donate whole blood in as few as 3 days after a platelet donation or donate platelets 14 days after a whole blood donation. You can donate platelets up to 24 times each year and whole blood every 56 days. Donor eligibility guidelines are the same for both platelet and whole blood donations except platelet donors are asked to refrain from aspirin or products containing aspirin for 72 hours prior to donation.