

Gulf Coast Regional Blood Center

What to expect as a first-time blood donor

You know that there are good reasons to give blood, but if you haven't donated before, you are probably wondering what to expect. Although the actual blood draw takes only a few minutes, the entire donation process may take about an hour.

A quick overview of what happens during donation:

STEPS	DONATION PROCESS
Before Donation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The day of your donation, visit www.giveblood.org and click on <i>CFLexpress</i> to complete your health history interview from your home or office. This is optional, but will help speed up your donation! Read the information sheet about donating blood. Be sure to eat a hearty meal before you donate.
Hydration Station	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drink a bottle of water at the Hydration Station.
Health History About 15 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Blood Center crew member will welcome you into a screening booth, where you'll present your photo ID and provide basic information about yourself. In private, answer questions about your past and present health; this information is kept confidential. The screener will return and administer a mini health exam (temperature, blood pressure, heart rate). A blood drop will be taken from your finger to determine your iron level.
Donation About 25 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A crew member will escort you to a donation bed near other donors. Your arm will be examined and cleaned with a wet scrub. Now your donation begins. Squeeze a ball to keep the blood flowing. Once the needle is in place, it usually takes less than 10 minutes to draw a unit of blood. After your donation is complete, the needle will be removed and a bandage will be applied.
Revitalization Station At least 15 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sit and have a snack and a drink at the Revitalization Station for about 15 minutes. You're all done! As long as you're feeling good (not lightheaded or dizzy), go out and enjoy your day. You've earned it! You've helped save a life!
After Donation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drink additional water for the rest of the day. Keep the bandage in place for a few hours. Avoid strenuous physical activity, vigorous exercise or heavy lifting for the remainder of the day. If you begin to feel lightheaded or dizzy, lie down until feeling better. The following day, log on to Digital Donor at www.giveblood.org to view your health check results and points you've earned for the CFL Store!



Before Donation... Sleep, Eat And Drink

- Get a good night's **sleep**.
- **Eat** regular meals to make sure that you are not donating on an empty stomach. It is important to eat a good meal at least a couple of hours before donating.
- **Drink** plenty of fluids. When you donate blood, your body loses about two cups of fluid. After donation your body replaces the fluid almost immediately.

Look for the Hydration Station

Visit the Hydration Station where you will be provided with water prior to your donation. This will help ensure that you have a pleasant donating experience.

During Donation...

We use **AMT (Applied Muscle Tension) techniques during the donation**. AMT is a simple muscle tensing technique that consists of alternately contracting and then relaxing muscle groups in the body. One method is to tighten the muscles of the legs and buttocks for about five seconds, relax for five to 10 seconds and repeat the tensing exercise. Another method is to squeeze a ball in the hand, alternating between the right and left hands. We will ask donors to practice this technique at the beginning of phlebotomy and continue the exercises for as long as they are comfortable doing so during the donation.

After Your Donation... Revitalization Station

Upon completion of the donation, sit on the side of the donation bed and dangle your feet over the side. If you feel lightheaded, lie back down on the bed for a few moments. Sit there for a moment prior to slowly standing and walking to the Revitalization Station for a drink and a snack.

Please remain at the Revitalization Station at least 15 minutes or as long as you feel is necessary. It is important that you drink fluids during this time, particularly if it is hot outside. If you experience any lightheadedness or don't feel quite right, please tell a Blood Center crew member.

Avoid strenuous physical activity or heavy lifting for the day. If you feel light-headed, lie down until feeling better.



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Commit for Life.®

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A Nonprofit Community Blood Center and Member of America's Blood Centers, aaBB and the Texas Medical Center.