

Ready to start planning your care? Call us at [800-525-2225](tel:800-525-2225) to make an appointment.

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Memorial Sloan Kettering
Cancer Center

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1. Why should I donate blood/platelets?

Many cancer patients depend on blood and platelet transfusions to help them regain their strength, fight infections, and recover from cancer treatment. By donating your blood or platelets, you will be helping patients fight against their cancer.

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2. Who is eligible to give blood/platelets?

Donors must be in good general health, be 17 to 75 years old, and weigh at least 110 pounds. However, there are certain exceptions to these guidelines. If you are 76 or older, you may still donate blood or platelets if you have written approval from your doctor dated within six months of your donation. If you are 16 years old, you may donate blood if you have a consent form signed by your parent or legal guardian. Consent forms are available by calling the Blood Donor Program, [212-639-8177](tel:212-639-8177) or emailing donateblood@mskcc.org.

For more specific information about donor qualifications, see [Additional Donor Requirements](#).

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3. Do I need my parents' permission to give blood/platelets?

In New York, you do not need your parents' permission to donate blood/platelets if you are age 17 or older. If you are 16 years old, you may donate blood at Memorial Sloan Kettering if you have a consent form signed by your parent or legal guardian. To receive a consent form, call the Blood Donor Program at [212-639-8177](tel:212-639-8177) or email donateblood@mskcc.org.

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4. Do I need official identification?

Yes, before you donate blood or platelets, regulations require that you show identification with your name and your signature or a photo.

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5. Is there a substitute for blood?

No. Only the human body makes this precious fluid.

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6. Is it safe to give blood/platelets?

Yes, it is safe to give blood and platelets. All needles and supplies used to collect blood/platelets are sterile, disposable, and used only once — for you — before being discarded.

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7. Does blood differ by race or ethnic group?

No. Everyone has an ABO blood type, and most transfusions can be performed if the blood type of the donor and patient are compatible, regardless of their races or ethnicities.

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8. How will I feel after donating?

Most donors feel fine after donating blood or platelets, but a small number of people may experience an upset stomach, feel faint or dizzy, or have bruising, redness or pain where the needle was inserted. It's helpful to drink extra fluids for 48 hours following your donation. Your body will replace the liquid part of the blood (plasma) and platelets within two days and the red blood cells within 56 days.

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9. How soon after donating can I return to normal activities?

You should plan to spend about an hour in the Donor Room if you are giving blood and two and a half hours if you are giving platelets. As long as you feel well, you can resume normal activities after leaving the Donor Room. However, you should avoid heavy lifting and pushing heavy objects for at least 24 hours after giving blood .

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10. Can I donate during menstruation?

Yes, as long as you are feeling well.

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11. How often can I donate blood?

You must wait a minimum of 56 days between whole blood donations. You must wait at least seven days after donating blood before you can donate platelets. After an automated double red cell collection, you must wait 112 days before donating again.

You can donate platelets once in a seven-day period and up to 24 times a year. You must wait at least seven days after donating platelets before donating whole blood. After an automated double red cell collection, you must wait 112 days before donating again.

In any eight-week period, you can make one blood donation and one platelet donation or six platelet donations.

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12. How do I make an appointment to donate blood or platelets?

Call the Blood Donor Room at [212-639-8177](tel:212-639-8177) or email donateblood@mskcc.org.

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13. Where is the Blood Donor Room located?

Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center
Schwartz Building Lobby
1250 First Avenue
(between 67th and 68th Streets)
New York, NY 10065




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