



BloodBulletin

Double Red Cell Donation Experience

ALYX

What is a double red cell donation?

Double red cell donation allows donors who meet certain criteria to donate two units of red blood cells during one appointment as an automated donation process. During a double red cell donation only red blood cells are collected. The remaining blood components, along with saline, are returned to the donor. Donors often leave the donation site feeling better than after a standard whole blood donation because they leave better hydrated.

The entire process takes about 20 minutes longer than a whole blood donation visit. In the long term, however, donors save time by making fewer visits to the blood center, as the maximum number of donations possible in a year is reduced from six to three.

How double red cell donations help patients

Red blood cells are the most frequently used blood component and are needed by almost every type of patient requiring a transfusion, including accident and trauma victims, premature babies, and patients undergoing treatment for leukemia and other life-threatening diseases. Also, many patients require several red blood cell transfusions. With double red cell donations, donors contribute as much in one visit as they previously did in two.

Type O donors in high demand

Donations of type O red blood cells are always needed. Overall, type O blood is the most commonly transfused blood type, with about 60 percent of all transfusions conducted with type O blood. By collecting two red cell products at once from type O donors, the Red Cross can provide a continuous blood supply through fewer donations.

Basic eligibility requirements for double red cell donation

- You must be in general good health.
- You must meet the minimum* age requirement. There is no upper age limit.
- You must provide signed parental consent, if required.*
- You must have waited the minimum* time between donations.
- You must provide an acceptable form of identification.
- Women must be at least 5'5" tall and weigh a minimum of 175 lbs.
- Men must be at least 5'1" tall and weigh a minimum of 150 lbs.
- Both men and women must have a 40 percent or higher hematocrit level.
- Donors can give double red cells every 112 days or 16 weeks.

** Some requirements vary by state, by donor age, or by donation type. Please call 1-800-RED CROSS or check with your Red Cross representative for specific information.*