



HOW TO ENHANCE YOUR DONATION EXPERIENCE

Although you probably know that there are good reasons to give blood, if you haven't donated before, it's normal to be a little nervous. To help ensure that you have a pleasant donating experience, please read through the suggestions in this guide.

A QUICK OVERVIEW... of what happens during donation

If you have never donated blood before, you are probably wondering what you can expect. Although the actual blood draw takes only a few minutes, the entire donation process may take an hour or more.

STEPS	DONATION PROCESS	HOW LONG?
Registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present your photo ID Card • Read information sheet about donating blood. 	5 minutes
Health History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide basic demographic and health information • Answer questions about past and present health history (information is kept private) • Undergo mini exam to determine if you are able to donate (temperature, blood pressure, heart rate). Give blood drop to determine hemoglobin level. 	15 minutes
Hydration Station	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drink water or other beverage at the Hydration Station prior to your donation. 	5 minutes
Donation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sit in comfortable chair/cot near other donors • Answer a few questions and extend donor arm • Squeeze a ball to keep the blood flowing. Once needle is in place, it usually takes less than 10 minutes to draw a unit of blood • Occasionally it may be necessary to lower the upper part of your cot and/or raise your legs • Complete donation, after which the needle will be removed and a bandage applied. 	25 minutes
Revitalization Station	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sit and relax for a few minutes to have a snack and a drink after being escorted to the Revitalization Station • ALL DONE! Enjoy your day. You've earned it! You've helped save a life! 	10 minutes
After Donation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid strenuous physical activity or heavy lifting for a few hours. If you feel light-headed, lie down until feeling better. 	

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.
- **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 by drawing water into your blood from surrounding tissues.

Look for The Hydration Station

Your Donor Care Technician will assist you to 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.

The value of drinking water thirty minutes before the donation has been found to enhance the donation experience. In addition to pro-actively replenishing fluid loss from donation, the timing of the fluid intake creates a bit of gastric distention that causes the venous system to maintain circulatory distribution throughout the body. This helps prevent one of the most common types of donor reactions – light-headedness.



DURING DONATION...

During blood donation some people feel light-headed or dizzy. One way to help prevent this is to use **Applied Muscle Tension (AMT)**.

AMT is a simple behavioral technique that may be useful in enhancing your blood donation experience. AMT can also be referred to as isometric exercise. It consists of dividing your body by major muscle group regions and tightening the muscles of one of the regions while silently counting to five followed by releasing/relaxing the muscles and counting to five. Upon completion of the tighten/relax cycle, select another muscle region and repeat the tightening and relaxing exercise.

We will ask that you practice this technique from the time you get on the donation chair, until you are released for the Revitalization Station.

Once the needle is inserted you will be asked to intermittently squeeze and release the hand of your donation arm throughout the donation.

Here's how it will work:

REGION 1: UPPER BODY

Tighten 1-2-3-4-5

Release 1-2-3-4-5

REGION 2: ABDOMEN

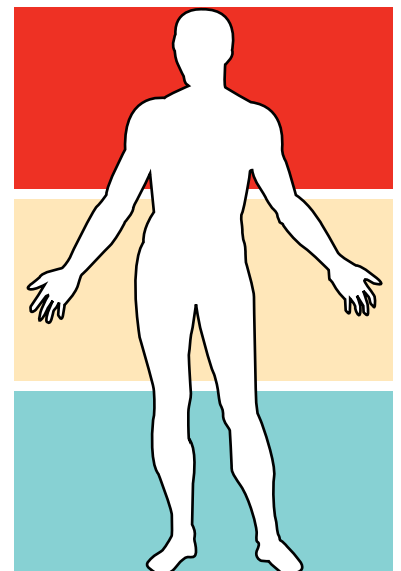
Tighten 1-2-3-4-5

Release 1-2-3-4-5

REGION 3: LEGS

Tighten 1-2-3-4-5

Release 1-2-3-4-5



AFTER YOUR DONATION... Revitalization Station

Upon completion of the donation, while still on the donation bed, dangle your feet over the side of the bed while you sit there for a moment prior to standing and walking to the Revitalization Station. There you will be given replenishing nutrition and hydration.



Please remain at the Revitalization Station as long as you feel necessary. If you experience any light-headedness please tell a Donor Care Technician. These small measures can make a big difference in enhancing your experience of donating life-saving blood.

ALL DONE! Enjoy your day.
You've earned it! You've helped
Save a Life. Right Here, Right Now.

*Avoid strenuous physical activity or heavy lifting for a few hours.
If you feel light-headed, lie down until feeling better.*



Personal Experience of a First-time Donor

The morning of the blood drive I called my friend Amy about a dozen times. I had been all excited to do this. We both volunteer at a hospital, so I know the need for blood donors. But, I also know that I don't really like the sight of blood or needles. But I was determined. So, I read up, took a bottle of Gatorade with me and was fine through the whole registration and health screening process. It was really helpful to have Amy there. We chatted, did homework, and played hangman. All my hard-earned calm left me when I saw another donor become pale.

The nurse elevated her legs and put a cold cloth on her forehead. OK, I thought, this is going to be ME! But Amy had come prepared (she knew how thrilled I was about needles!). She pulled out a bunch of note-cards that she'd titled "DONATION STRATEGIES." There was this 3-step exercise to do during the actual blood-draw. Amy and I practiced in the waiting zone: Tense up, release. Tense again, release. . .

and so on. At first I felt a little silly, but I was glad that I wouldn't just be sitting there – I could do something to help myself. The needle prick wasn't too bad (I had to look away though.), then things began to sink in and I started to feel a little light-headed. I noticed that Amy was doing the tensing and so I copied her. At first I was so anxious I had to remember to breathe, but it got easier and I felt my strength (and confidence) return. Pretty soon it was over – only 8 minutes had gone by!

We joined a bunch of people at the Canteen to have a post-donation snack. I was surprised to hear that not everyone was super-brave. Many people were pretty nervous at first. The girl who had to lie down was there; she no longer looked pale or shaky. From all the excitement I was a bit shaky though, and rewarded myself with some cookies. Now that I knew what worked, I would be more prepared for next time.

**The material presented is reproduced with permission of the copyright owner, Christopher R. France, Ph.D. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.*

***The contents of this document are subject to change without notice.*