



Be an Apheresis Donor

Why are platelets important?

Platelets are vital to life. They are small, fragile cells that are essential for normal blood clotting. When an injury occurs, the platelets are activated and the clotting process is initiated.

Who needs platelet transfusions?

- ◆ cancer patients
- ◆ accident victims
- ◆ patients with blood disorders
- ◆ bone marrow transplant patients

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 equipment used for platelet donation. All tubing, bags and the needle used to collect your platelets are new, sterile and used only once by you. After use, the entire disposable kit is discarded.

You can donate platelets and still be a whole blood donor.

Donor eligibility guidelines are the same for both platelet and whole blood donations, except:

- ◆ Platelet donors are asked to refrain from aspirin, aspirin products or any anti-inflammatory medications for two days prior to donating

And remember:

- ◆ Drink plenty of water before and after donating
- ◆ Have a good meal prior to donating and avoid fatty foods, such as bacon or fried food
- ◆ Consume more calcium a few days prior to donating

Can you take platelets from my whole blood donation?

With our current whole blood donation collecting system, we cannot collect platelets. With the apheresis machine, you can donate six to eight times the number of platelets that can be obtained from a whole blood donation.

Often a patient will need more than one unit of platelets per treatment. Platelet donation from a single donor greatly reduces the chances of an immune system reaction to the transfusion. Bone marrow transplant, cancer and leukaemia patients, whose immune systems are already compromised, benefit especially from single-donor platelet transfusions.



What is it like to be an apheresis donor?

Donating blood by apheresis 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 and collecting set. The blood then takes a spin in a centrifuge to separate it into platelets, red blood cells and plasma. Each of these components is collected in a separate bag and the remainder of your blood is returned to you. This cycle is repeated until the required volume of each component is collected.

A combined donation of platelets, packed red blood cells and plasma by apheresis takes about the same volume of blood as a whole blood donation.



Bermuda Hospitals Board

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