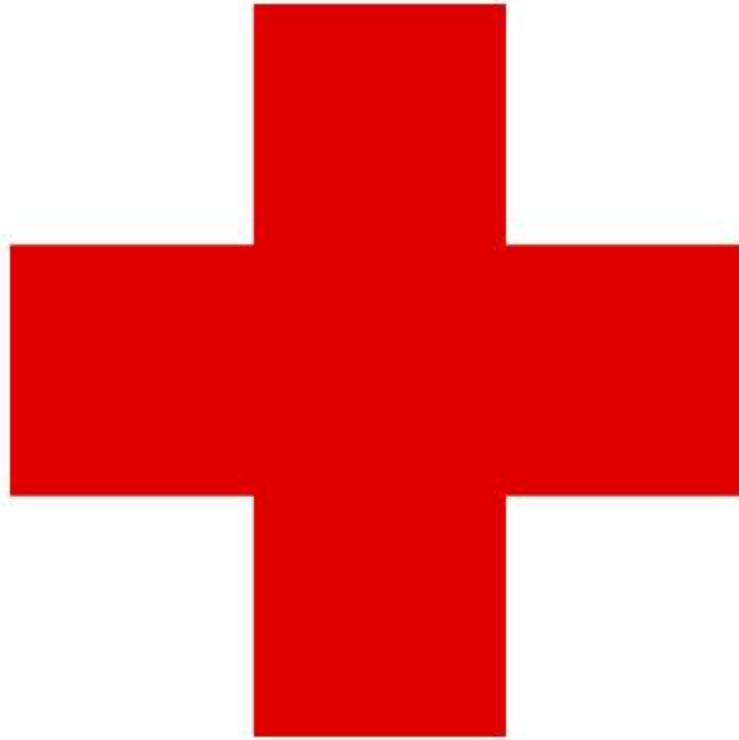


Red Cross issues urgent call for most needed blood types

August 11 2015 4:14 PM



**American
Red Cross**

Type O negative, B negative, A negative blood donors asked to restock shelves

ST. LOUIS – The American Red Cross is facing a looming shortage of the blood types most needed by patients and is calling on eligible donors with O negative, B negative and A negative blood to give now to prevent an emergency situation. Blood donation appointments can be quickly and easily scheduled by using the Red Cross Blood Donor App, visiting redcrossblood.org or calling 1-800-RED CROSS.

Overall blood donations in the Red Cross Missouri-Illinois Blood Services Region have been approximately 3,000 fewer per month in June and July this year than the previous 10 months of the year. When demand for the most needed types begins to outpace donations, the Red Cross alerts donors to help restock the shelves.

Type O negative is the universal blood type and can be transfused to patients with any blood type. Types B negative and A negative can be transfused to Rh positive or negative patients. Eligible donors are encouraged to donate double red cells – a process where two units of red cells are collected while most of the plasma and platelets are returned to the donor – where available.

“Summer blood shortages are not uncommon, but they can be prevented when generous volunteers roll up their sleeves to help save lives,” said Todd Wagner, donor recruitment director for the Red Cross Missouri-Illinois Region. “Many donors have already given this summer. We’re now asking donors who haven’t donated, and those who are eligible again, to make an appointment to give now to help ensure blood products are available for patients.”

Platelets and type AB plasma also needed

Platelet donors and those with type AB blood are also continually needed to help ensure patients receive the lifesaving blood products they need. Platelets – a key clotting component of blood often needed by cancer patients, surgical patients and bone marrow recipients – must be transfused within five days of donation, so donations are constantly needed. Donors with type AB blood are urged to give blood or platelets to restock the plasma supply. Type AB donors have the universal plasma type, which can be given to patients of all blood types.

Individuals who donated blood earlier this summer may be eligible to donate again and help patients like an expectant mother at a Red Cross-supported hospital who is currently receiving nearly 100 units of blood products a week until she delivers. Her need alone could add up to 1,100 units.

How to donate blood

The free Blood Donor App – available in app stores by searching for American Red Cross or by texting BLOODAPP to 90999 – not only makes appointment scheduling easy, but donors can also access their digital donor card and be notified when their donation is distributed to a hospital. Donors can also visit [redcrossblood.org](https://www.redcrossblood.org) or call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) to make an appointment or for more information. All blood types are needed to ensure a reliable supply for patients. A blood donor card or driver’s license or two other forms of identification are required at check-in.

Individuals who are 17 years of age (16 with parental consent in some states), weigh at least 110 pounds and are in generally good health may be eligible to donate blood. High school students and other donors 18 years of age and younger also have to meet certain height and weight requirements.

Blood donors in the Missouri-Illinois Blood Services Region can now save time at their next donation by using RapidPass to complete their pre-donation reading and health history questionnaire online, on the day of their donation, prior to arriving at the blood drive. To get started and learn more, visit redcrossblood.org/RapidPass and follow the instructions on the site.

About the American Red Cross

The American Red Cross shelters, feeds and provides emotional support to victims of disasters; supplies about 40 percent of the nation's blood; teaches skills that save lives; provides international humanitarian aid; and supports military members and their families. The Red Cross is a not-for-profit organization that depends on volunteers and the generosity of the American public to perform its mission. For more information, please visit redcross.org or visit us on Twitter at [@RedCross](https://twitter.com/RedCross).