

Blood Donation Quick Facts



Blood Donation and PrEP

What is PrEP?

PrEP, or pre-exposure prophylaxis, is a highly effective combination of medications that prevent HIV infection when taken as prescribed. It is a recommended tool for maintaining sexual health.

Can I donate while on PrEP?

Currently, there is a four-month deferral period for individuals using PrEP. The medications in PrEP can affect the sensitivity of screening tests, making it harder to detect low levels of HIV.

In its apology to 2SLGBTQIA+ communities in May 2024, Canadian Blood Services is committed to evolving policies, practices, and interactions to be as inclusive as possible. Canadian Blood Services is actively collaborating with researchers to better understand how PrEP impacts screening tests and to explore ways to reduce the deferral period for PrEP users.

Can people who are U=U donate blood?

Unfortunately, no. U=U, or “undetectable equals untransmittable,” means that individuals living with HIV who have undetectable viral loads cannot sexually transmit the virus. However, blood donation involves a greater volume of blood, which increases the likelihood of transmission if any HIV is present, even at undetectable levels. For this reason, individuals who are U=U are currently ineligible to donate blood.



Blood Donation, Multiple Partners, and Anal Sex

What should I consider about multiple sexual partners when donating blood?

The risk of acquiring sexually transmitted infections like HIV or Hepatitis C increases with new or multiple sexual partners. Blood donors are asked if they've had new and/or multiple sexual partners in the last three months.

If the answer is yes, donors are asked: ***“Have you had anal sex in the last three months?”***

If you have had anal sex but with the same partner for at least three months—or have not had multiple partners in this time—you can proceed with the donation process.

If you've had anal sex with new or multiple partners, you must wait three months from the last instance to donate. This waiting period reduces the chance that recent infections go undetected during screening.

What about polyamorous relationships when donating blood?

Donor eligibility criteria currently do not distinguish between new or long-term multiple partners. If you've engaged in anal sex with one or more partners in the last three months, you'll need to wait three months before donating.

Why is anal sex a focus for sexual-behaviour screening?

Receptive anal sex carries a higher per-act risk of HIV transmission compared to other sexual activities. Screening questions around anal sex help ensure safety by reducing overall risks.



Blood Donation and Gender Diverse Folx

Striving for a more inclusive, safe, and affirming experience

Prior to recent changes to the donor screening and eligibility process, many trans and non-binary folx were asked intrusive questions prior to donating. Trans donors are no longer asked if they've had gender-affirming surgery. Trans donors with a binary gender can register in their gender. If they were previously registered in sex assigned at birth they can change this in the GiveBlood app, or in a clinic.

Also, donors are no longer asked to verbally state their gender at each donation appointment.

At present time, legal names are still asked and recorded during donations. Canadian Blood Services is committed to making changes to their systems so that chosen names are the only names used during the donation.

Although diverse gender options are not yet available in the registration process, Canadian Blood Services is working on addressing these to make sure the process and experience is more inclusive for trans and non-binary donors. Currently, trans and gender diverse donors with a binary gender can now register in their gender and can make this change themselves in the GiveBlood app or by calling **1-888-2-DONATE**.



Learn more at blood.ca



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