

Helping Hand™

Blood Donation: Directed

People who are thinking about donating blood often have questions (Picture 1). Here are answers to the questions most often asked about directed blood donations.

What is a Directed Blood Donation?

A directed blood donation allows a family member or a friend who has a compatible blood type to donate blood for your child's transfusion.

How Do I Know if My Child Will Need a Transfusion?

Your doctor will decide if your child might need a blood transfusion and how many units of blood may be needed.

Is Directed Donor Blood Safer than the Volunteer Donor Blood Supply?

No. The process of donating and testing the blood is exactly the same as for all other blood donations. Each donor is asked questions about their health and risk factors for disease. The donated blood is carefully tested for hepatitis, syphilis and the AIDS virus before it is sent to Nationwide Children's Hospital.

The safety of any blood donation greatly depends on the donor giving the Red Cross nurse complete and truthful answers to health-screening questions. Sometimes friends or family may feel pressured into making a directed donation, even though they would rather not answer questions about their health or lifestyle. Even if you know the donor personally, there is still a chance that a directed donation may transmit disease.



Picture 1 Making a blood donation.

You, your family and your friends may feel a sense of comfort knowing where the blood came from. However, directed donations are no safer than the general community blood supply. The Red Cross has many years' experience in identifying the very safest blood donors for all patients.

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Is Directed Donation for Everyone?

No. There are times when directed blood donations will not be able to meet all of your child's need for blood. Except for those patients who need open heart surgery, it may take at least 5 working days from the time of donation for the directed blood to arrive at Nationwide Children's Hospital. This means that directed donations are not possible for emergencies and unscheduled transfusions. Your doctor will discuss your child's needs and help you decide whether to choose directed blood donations.

Is There a Fee for the Service?

Yes. There is an added cost because directed donations have to be stored and handled separately from the community blood supply. To avoid wasting blood and receiving unnecessary charges, please be sure to match the number and timing of directed donations with your child's transfusion needs. Check your plans with your child's doctor.

When Can a Directed Blood Donation Be Made?

The donor may donate blood up to 40 days before it is needed, but often fresh blood is required.

How Do I Begin the Directed Donation Process?

- Tell your child's doctor or nurse of your choice to receive directed blood donations. The process cannot begin without a doctor's approval.
- The order form for Directed Donation must be completed (sections A and B), and forward or FAX it to the hospital blood bank (614) 722-5386.
- If there is not written proof of your child's blood type, a test called a "type and screen" will need to be done. This can be done at the Nationwide Children's Hospital Outpatient lab in the lower level of the Outpatient Care Center, in one of our other labs in Columbus or a local lab in your area. This test can be arranged through your child's doctor or the Pre-Admission Testing Department.
- Next, you will need to find donors with matching blood types. Check with your doctor or nurse to find out which blood types are compatible. Blood typing of a potential donor can be ordered by the patient's doctor through the Outpatient Lab. This testing is free if it is done at Children's.
- Call the American Red Cross special needs scheduler at (614) 251-1450 to schedule appointments for your friends or family to donate blood. Outside Central Ohio area, call 1-800-338-8086.

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How Do I Begin the Directed Donation Process?, continued

Directed donor blood may be donated at one of these locations:

Carriage Place Donor Center, Dublin 2674 Bethel Rd. (614) 326-2337

Westbelt Donor Center, Hilliard 4327 Equity Drive (614) 334-0434

StoneRidge Donor Center, Gahanna 337 StoneRidge Lane (614) 253-2740 ext 2354

What Do I Need to Know About Recruiting Donors?

Directed donors need to meet all the same standards as other blood donors. Some of the people you recruit may not pass screening or testing. For that reason, you may wish to find 1 or 2 more donors than you need. If you want to know how many units of blood have been donated, ask your child's doctor or nurse to call the Blood Bank at (614) 722-5391.

If you have any questions, be sure to ask your doctor or nurse.