




**HELP FIGHT  
CANCER**   
**GIVE  
PLATELETS**

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 Irish Blood  
Transfusion Service  
Seirbhís Fuilaeistriúcháin na hÉireann

**Irish Blood Transfusion Service**  
National Blood Centre, James's Street, Dublin 8

**Munster Regional Transfusion Centre**  
St. Finbarr's Hospital, Douglas Road, Cork

Donor Line 1850 731 137  
[www.giveblood.ie](http://www.giveblood.ie)

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## Introduction

You may already be a blood donor, or giving blood may be something you always wanted to do. Did you know there is also an extra special gift you can give, to help save or improve the lives of Irish patients? The Irish Blood Transfusion Service needs new platelet donors.

Platelet donors are very special people who make a huge contribution to supporting Irish healthcare. There are already hundreds of platelet donors in Ireland, but we need many more like them. This leaflet explains exactly what platelets are, who needs them and how you can help by becoming a platelet donor.

Thank you for taking the first step to becoming a platelet donor.

## What are platelets?

Platelets are small cells present in the blood of all healthy people. They are essential to enable blood to clot properly. Patients who do not have enough platelets in their blood are prone to spontaneous bleeding.

## Who benefits from platelet donations?

Over 20,000 platelet transfusions are needed every year in Ireland. The majority of these platelets go to patients with serious medical conditions such as cancer or leukaemia, especially those receiving chemotherapy or after a bone marrow transplant. Platelets may also be needed by patients undergoing major surgery, patients who have had extensive injury, or newborn babies who are born with low platelet counts and need transfusions.

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**THE PLATELET CLINIC**  
Irish Blood Transfusion Service  
National Blood Centre  
James's Street  
Dublin 8  
**BUSINESS REPLY**  
D08 NHR

No Postage Necessary  
if posted in the Republic of Ireland



## How do we collect platelets for transfusion?

A normal donation of blood can be split into three separate components – red cells, platelets & plasma, helping to save or improve the lives of three different people. One of these components is the platelet component. However, the platelet component from four separate blood donations is required to make one single dose of platelets. Alternatively, we use a process called apheresis.

Your blood is passed through a special cell separator machine which extracts platelets. Each apheresis donation can provide one, two or even three life saving adult doses. This is a more efficient method of collecting the platelets we need.

Platelets have a shelf-life of just 5-7 days after donation, so it is important to maintain a constant supply. Therefore, there is an increasing need for donors who are willing to become apheresis platelet donors. As donors keep their red cells during the apheresis process, it is possible to donate once every four weeks.

## Is it a safe procedure for the donor?

Yes, it is very safe. A full blood count is taken before each donation to ensure that you have enough platelets to donate. Your body replaces all of the platelets that you have given within a few days.

It is impossible to catch any virus infection by donating platelets or blood. We use a new sterile disposable set for each donation.

## You may become a platelet donor if...

- \* You are blood group O, A, B, AB
- \* You are between 18 and 59 years old
- \* You weigh 9 stone 7lbs (60kgs) or over

## You cannot become a Platelet Donor if...

- \* You have ever received a blood transfusion
- \* You are a female who has had a pregnancy of any gestation
- \* If you need to take aspirin or anti-inflammatories regularly (Note: You may still be eligible to donate blood. Please check [www.giveblood.ie](http://www.giveblood.ie))



## What is involved in being a platelet donor?

The platelet clinic is run on an appointment basis. Normally we ask that you donate every four to six weeks, and that you make another appointment before you leave the clinic.

Donations take place both at the National Blood Centre, James's Street, Dublin 8, and at the Munster Regional Transfusion Centre, St. Finbarr's Hospital, Cork. During the donation process you can watch television, read or just relax. Once the donation is complete, you are fit to resume activities.

## What do I do now?

Just fill in the form opposite, detach as indicated and send by freepost. We will then contact you to arrange an assessment interview. This simple process includes a blood sample to ensure your own platelet count is suitable for this type of donation.

If you have any queries please contact us on either of the numbers listed below.

National Blood Centre, James's Street, Dublin 8.  
Telephone: 01 432 2833

Munster Regional Transfusion Centre, St. Finbarr's Hospital, Douglas Road, Cork.  
Telephone: 021 480 7429

## I wish to become a platelet donor

DONOR ID: *(If known)*

TITLE

NAME

SURNAME

DATE OF BIRTH

COUNTRY OF BIRTH

GENDER (MALE / FEMALE)

ADDRESS:

CONTACT NO:

EMAIL ADDRESS:

HAVE YOU DONATED BLOOD IN THE LAST 5 YEARS?

BLOOD TYPE *(If known)*

WHERE DID YOU HEAR ABOUT PLATELET DONATION?

- BLOOD CLINIC  
 RECRUITMENT DRIVE  
 OTHER *(Please state)*

WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE CALLED TO  DUBLIN OR  CORK CLINIC ?

DONOR SIGNATURE

DATE

### FOR CLINIC USE ONLY

MOST RECENT DONATION

LEFT ARM  ADEQUATE  INADEQUATE

RIGHT ARM  ADEQUATE  INADEQUATE

SIGNATURE OF STAFF MEMBER