

Donor Deferrals

A blood donor deferral period is the length of time that an individual is not eligible to donate blood based on criteria in place to protect the health and safety of both the donor and the patient who receives the blood.

In the United States, a blood collection facility determines whether individuals are eligible to donate blood based on requirements established by the Food and Drug Administration; state and local governments; the Association for the Advancement of Blood and Biotherapies, an organization that sets standards to advance blood bank quality and safety; and the blood collection facility itself.

This document describes some of the most common reasons for deferring a potential blood donor. After a temporary donor deferral period ends, the individual can return to the blood collector and may donate if all donor eligibility criteria are met.



Medical Treatments

Individuals are temporarily ineligible to donate after certain vaccinations, a blood transfusion, organ transplant or recovery from an infection that could be transmitted by blood (such as malaria or babesiosis).



Medications

People who take certain medications are deferred from donation. Consult the [Medication Deferral List](#) and [Donor History Questionnaire](#) to view these medications and deferral periods.



Health Conditions

People may be deferred from donation if they have a history of cancer, bleeding conditions or blood disease. Potential donors should [contact their local blood collector](#) to discuss their eligibility.



Sexual Activity

Men who have sex with men and commercial sex workers are not eligible to donate for three months following their most recent sexual contact. People who have been treated for syphilis or gonorrhea are deferred for three months.



Travel History

Your [blood collector](#) will review your travel history with you. A visit to a country where a transfusion-transmissible infection is endemic, or to a country experiencing a disease outbreak, in the last three years may result in a temporary deferral.



Intravenous Drug Use

People who have injected drugs that are not prescribed by a doctor are not eligible to donate for three months following their most recent use.

Tattoos and Piercings

There is no deferral period for donors who received a tattoo in a state-regulated facility. People who received tattoos in facilities or states that are not regulated must wait three months before giving blood.

People who have had a piercing using single-use equipment are eligible to donate without deferral. Otherwise, they are deferred for three months. Check with your [local blood collector](#) for state-specific information.

What about living in Europe?

In May 2022, the Food and Drug Administration eliminated geography-based deferrals for variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, also known as “Mad Cow” disease. There is no longer a deferral period for living in Europe between 1980 and 1990.

Is there anyone who should not donate blood?

Anyone who has ever had a positive test for HIV, hepatitis or Ebola virus should not donate blood.

