

# The plasma donor guidebook



**Canadian  
Blood  
Services**

BLOOD  
PLASMA  
STEM CELLS  
ORGANS  
& TISSUES

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# Intro

Welcome aboard! Your lifesaving journey begins now. This guide has the information you'll need to help you reach your plasma donation goals and become an "Experienced Donor".

We know the journey from your first donation to your fifth — and beyond — is unlike any other. That's why we're providing you with the tools needed to make this a meaningful journey. Because your plasma donations are essential to helping someone wake up to a healthier tomorrow.

**Thank you for joining Canada's Lifeline.**



# Safety first

At Canadian Blood Services, safety is paramount.

There are no compromises or exceptions when it comes to the safety of plasma, blood, and other blood products that patients across Canada rely on for transfusion or other types of treatments. We follow rigorous safety protocols to ensure the safety of our donors, and we do not collect plasma that could pose a risk to donors, or patients who will be receiving treatment derived from your donated plasma.






## Can I donate plasma?

### To donate plasma, you must be:

- In good general health
- 17 years of age or older
- At least 50 kg (110 lb) in weight
- At least 145 cm in height

## Other key information about donor eligibility

### You can donate if:

-  You've recently had basic dental work, like a cleaning or a filling.
-  You've been to a malaria risk zone, depending on the length of your stay in certain countries or regions. For information on waiting periods after travel outside of Canada, call us at **1-888-236-6283**.
-  For most types of cancer, you are now eligible to donate one year after your treatment is complete and you are cancer-free.



**Scan the QR code** to view our full plasma donor eligibility criteria.

You can take our online eligibility quiz at **blood.ca** before your appointment.

Each time you come to donate, we check that your hemoglobin level is within an appropriate range for you to donate that day.

## Blood sample testing

We collect a blood sample from every plasma donor during each donation. Canadian Blood Services tests these samples for infectious agents, like HIV and hepatitis, and we also test the level of proteins in your plasma. This ensures plasma donations meet the highest safety and quality standards.

# Starting your plasma donation journey

Becoming a plasma donor means that you are making an immeasurable difference in the lives of patients across Canada who rely on donors like you every day. Thank you again for joining us — it means so much to so many.

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## What is plasma?

About 55 per cent of your blood volume is plasma. Plasma is a pale-yellow protein-rich liquid in blood that supports your immune system. There are two ways plasma can be used. Plasma used for transfusion is administered in hospitals to treat patients with bleeding disorders, trauma and other indications. Most of the plasma Canadian Blood Services collects is used to make medications called immunoglobulins. These lifesaving medications are used to treat immunodeficiency, autoimmune and neurological disorders, among a growing number of other medical conditions with an immune origin.



**Scan the QR code**  
to watch a video  
about plasma.

## Why do we need more plasma donations?

There is a global shortage of medications made from plasma called immunoglobulins. To strengthen Canada's supply of these medications for patients in this country whose lives depend on them, Canadian Blood Services is opening new donor centres and collecting more plasma.

### Who needs the plasma I donate?

Thousands of patients across Canada rely on medications, products, and treatments manufactured from donated plasma. Commonly used plasma products include:

- Albumin, which treats fluid loss in burn or trauma patients.
- Immunoglobulins, used to treat or prevent infections or immune disorders.
- Clotting factors, used for treating hemophilia and other bleeding disorders.

These medications are made from donated plasma and distributed to approximately 730 hospitals and clinics across Canada. It can take more than 100 donations to treat one patient for just one year for certain conditions, and some patients may need treatments for the rest of their lives.

A patient who depends on these medications is Cayleigh. She suffered from a series of illnesses and was rarely well enough to attend school until she was treated with immunoglobulin. Today, Cayleigh is healthy and excelling in her studies.



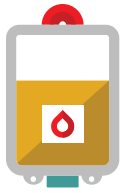
**Scan the QR code** to watch Cayleigh's video.

To read more impactful stories, visit [\*\*blood.ca/stories\*\*](https://blood.ca/stories).



**Cayleigh,**  
*plasma recipient*





## How does my plasma donation help?

Plasma is used to treat a growing number of illnesses and injuries including:



Nervous system disorders



Bleeding disorders



Surgeries



Rh disease (in newborns)



Chickenpox and measles



Rare blood disorders



Immune deficiencies



Organ transplants



Cancer



Kidney diseases



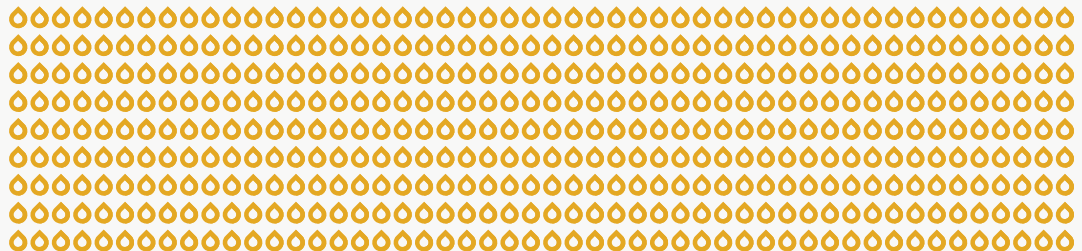
Severe burns

## Plasma donations needed to treat one patient for one year:



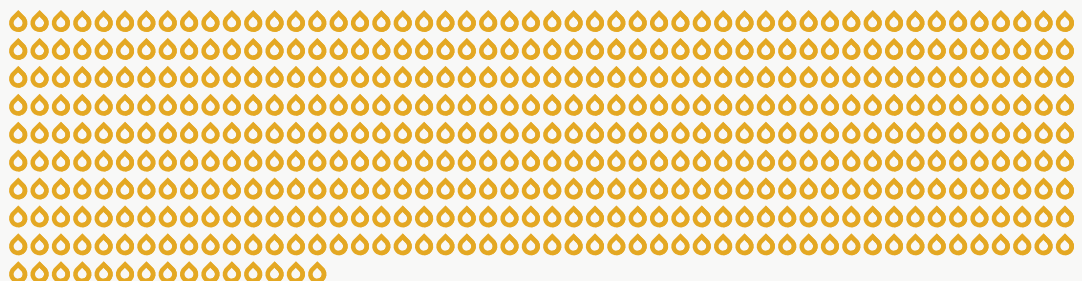
ALPHA-1 ANTITRYPSIN DEFICIENCY

900 plasma donations



CHRONIC INFLAMMATORY DEMYELINATING POLYNEUROPATHY

465 plasma donations



X2



IMMUNE DEFICIENCY

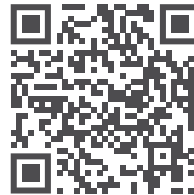
130 plasma donations



## How is plasma turned into lifesaving treatments?

Plasma can be used directly for transfusion into patients or manufactured into specialized medications. Most of the plasma Canadian Blood Services collects is used to make lifesaving medications called immunoglobulins. These medications are made from plasma donations collected from thousands of donors. Plasma is separated into different fractions and individual proteins, like immunoglobulin,

and the proteins are removed. Proteins are cleaned using light, heat, filtration and chemical treatments, as added safety measures. Then they are retested for infectious agents to ensure any pathogens have been completely eliminated.



To see how these medications are made, **scan the QR code** to watch a short video.

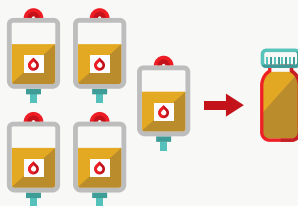
Every plasma donation is needed and makes a difference.

### IGIVnex®

1 donation  
20% 200ml vial



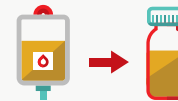
5 donations  
1 full 200ml vial



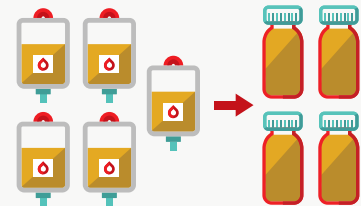
This is how your donated plasma is used to create lifesaving medications:

### Albumin

1 donation  
80% 200ml vial



5 donations  
4 full 200ml vial



# First time visitors

We will provide you with everything you need to feel at ease before, during, and after your first donation.

**Scan the QR code** to watch this video about a first-time donor.



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## Interesting facts about plasma donation

The process for donating plasma is similar to donating blood. The main difference is how plasma is collected — using apheresis. In this process, blood components (red blood cells, plasma, white blood cells and platelets) are separated using a centrifuge during the donation so that we only collect plasma. The rest of the blood components are returned to you. A plasma donation takes roughly 45 minutes, but we ask you to plan for your first few donations to take about 90 minutes. So, bring a book and relax, take your time and enjoy the amenities at the centre. You can also ask our staff any questions you may have at any time during the donation process.

A plasma donation involves just one needle, which is new and sterile. Most donors say they only feel a slight pressure when the needle is inserted. Plasma can be donated as often as once a week — your plasma supply typically replenishes itself within days after making a donation.

## How much can I donate?

We start with a lower collection volume at your first donation and gradually progress to a higher percentage of your total estimated blood volume (up to 18%) over a series of appointments. This estimate is determined using your height and weight on the day of donation.

## Introduction of saline

Whether or not you receive saline depends on the volume of your plasma donation. Saline is a mixture of salt and water. It helps keeps your body hydrated after you donate.

## How often should I donate?

We encourage you to donate at least once a month if you can.

## Your five-visit goal and beyond:



### Visit 1

It's time to make your first of many lifesaving donations. Thanks for being here!

At your first donation with Canadian Blood Services, you will receive a unique donor number while you're at our donor centre. You'll be able to use this number 48 hours after your first donation to log into our GiveBlood app and download your digital donor card, you will need your donor number to schedule your second donation yourself at [blood.ca](https://blood.ca) or using the **GiveBlood app**.

Before we start collecting your donation, we take a small blood sample that we will test for various infectious agents that could be harmful to a patient. For first-time plasma donors we also perform a total protein (TP) and serum protein electrophoresis (SPE) test using that sample to measure specific proteins in your blood to help identify some diseases. After this, we test TP and SPE at every 8th donation.

### Visit 2

Relax with a good book or take advantage of our free Wi-Fi to pass the time. Staff may inform you that, during your next visit, your donation volume may be increased based on factors such as weight, height, and how you felt during the donation.

### Visit 3

Depending on your weight and height, as well as how you felt after previous donations, we may now start increasing your donation volume.

Now that you've been here a few times, consider making your donation journey even more meaningful by:

- **Bringing a buddy.** Encourage a friend or family member to book an appointment and donate with you. Make it into a monthly adventure that you embark on together.

- **Donating to celebrate.** If you are donating plasma on a special occasion like your birthday or anniversary — remember — you are not only celebrating yourself, but also the lives you are saving.
- **Donating in honour or in support.** Donate in honour of or in support of a special person in your life.
- **Becoming an advocate.** You can help spread the word about the need for plasma. Become an advocate, helping others become plasma donors and be an integral part of Canada's Lifeline!
- **Donating in a group.** You can become a plasma champion and get your organization involved. Your organization or group can join Canadian Blood Services' Partners for Life program and create a lifesaving team.
- **Sharing on social media.** Don't forget to share your reason for donating on social media using **#CanadasLifeline** and **#PlasmaForLife**.

## Visit 4

You have reached four donations! Just one more to go to become an "Experienced Donor"!

Once again, we may increase the collection volume based on your weight and height that day and how you felt after your previous donations. By this time, you know how the donation process works. However, always feel free to ask our staff any questions you may have.

**Zawad,**  
*plasma donor, volunteer*







## Visit 5

### CONGRATULATIONS!

With your fifth donation, you are officially an “Experienced Donor”.

The journey has been amazing, and it has only just begun because the need for donated plasma is growing.

Now that you are an experienced donor, why not take your journey to the next level and become a plasma advocate — someone who inspires others to join this lifesaving mission. Create your personalized donation plan and commit to donating at least once a month. Canadian Blood Services also has a recognition program where you can become a milestone donor, like Nick.

Nick celebrated his 900th donation at the Kelowna plasma donor centre in September 2021.

When you reach a donation milestone, we acknowledge your contribution with a token of appreciation.



To learn more about the recognition program, **scan the QR code.**



*Nick, plasma donor*

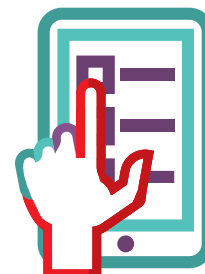
# Tips for your plasma donation journey

**Get ready to save lives.**

Every time you donate, it's important to keep these things  
in mind.

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## Before you donate:

- Drink lots of water.
- Eat a healthy meal and avoid fatty foods.
- Have a good night's sleep.
- If you have donated before and have shared your email address with us, you can complete your donor questionnaire via email or on our **GiveBlood app**.

We encourage you to keep your donor profile in our app up to date. You can use the app to store important information such as a list of all your current medications or where you have travelled.

## At the plasma donor centre:

- Check in with one of our staff.
- Complete the donor questionnaire at the donor centre for your first donation. For your future donations you will receive a link to the questionnaire on the day of your donation appointment and you can complete it before you arrive at the donor centre.
- Allow yourself a few minutes before your appointment to take a quick bathroom break. Your donation could take up to 45 minutes.

- Receive your unique donor number if donating for the first time.

## During donation:

- Read a book, watch TV, or browse your phone using our free Wi-Fi.
- Sit back, relax and donate. Thank you!

## After you donate:

- We will apply a pressure bandage to your arm.
- We will ask you to stay for about 5–15 minutes after you donate.
- Download the **GiveBlood app**.
- If this is your first donation, log into the GiveBlood app, select “donor card” from the menu on the top left corner and enter your unique donor number to retrieve your digital donor card.
- Share your donation story on social media with **#CanadasLifeline** and **#PlasmaForLife**.
- Answer our customer care call and provide feedback on your donation experience.
- Leave a Google review and complete the satisfaction survey that's emailed to you after your third donation.

## What to bring to your appointment:

- Government-issued photo ID if it is your first donation or your Canadian Blood Services donor card if you have donated before.
- A book to read while donating or a tablet to browse the internet.

## Donor center amenities:

To ensure you get the best out of your donation experience — the first time and every time — we have a number of things set up for you:

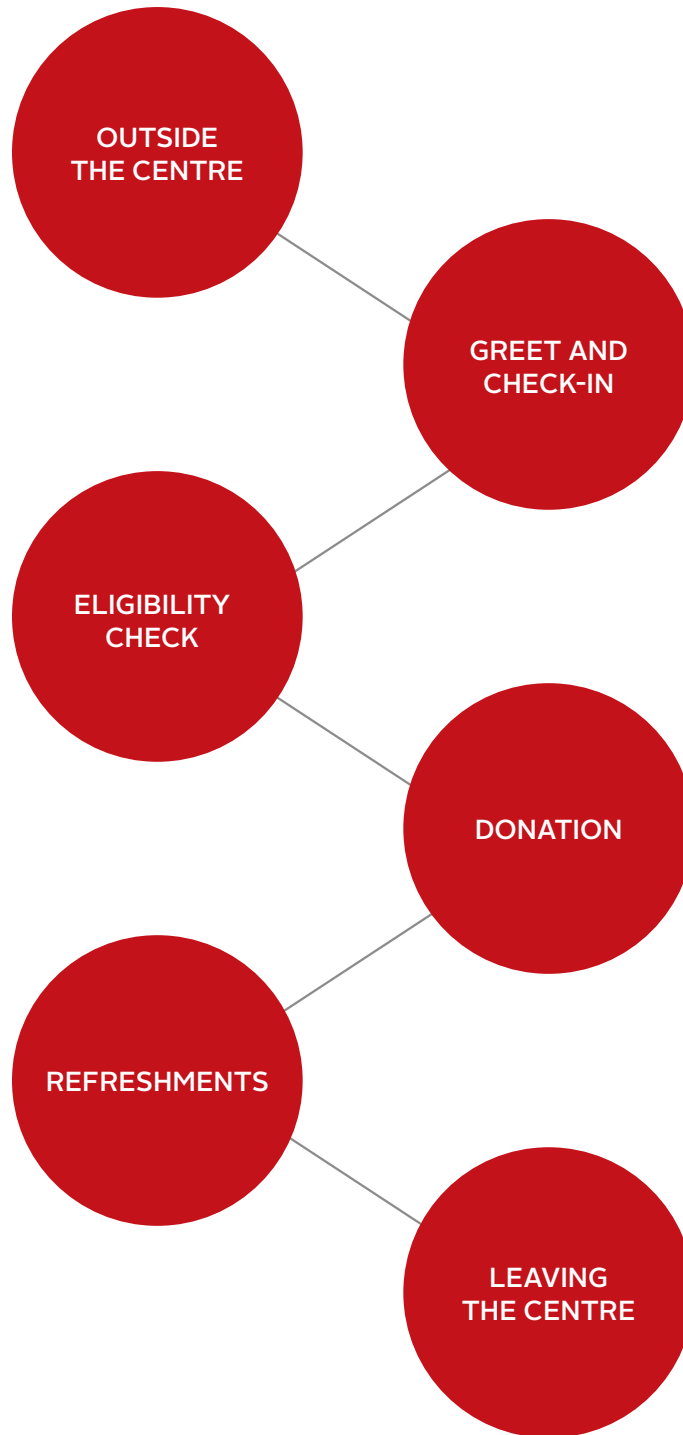
- Free Wi-Fi
- Free snacks
- TV with popular cable channels
- Locker to store your personal belongings
- Heartwarming donor stories to read
- Chances to win prizes during special events



# **Donation journey**

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## START



## FINISH

## Outside the centre

We have free parking available. Plan to arrive at the donor centre a few minutes before your appointment time.

## Greet and check-in

You will be greeted by one of our team members when you arrive.

We will ask for your government-issued photo ID if it's your first donation. We will also check your booking details in our system. If you have donated before, you can show your digital donor card.

## Eligibility check

We will ask you to complete the questionnaire. Once the questionnaire is complete, our staff will review your questionnaire to determine if you are eligible to donate that day. All your answers and information are confidential.

We will take your temperature and check your hemoglobin level with a quick finger stick test. Your hemoglobin must be at least 125g/L (12.5g/dL) to be eligible to donate plasma.

The system will generate your unique donor number. You will need this number to book your next appointment at **blood.ca** or using the **GiveBlood app**. From your second donation onward, you will receive this questionnaire by email. It will also be available on your GiveBlood app and can be completed the morning of your appointment day.

Each time you donate, we will measure your weight and height to determine the volume of plasma that's appropriate for you to donate.





## Donation

Your plasma donation is collected in cycles. Your blood is drawn, and a machine separates the plasma from the other blood components (red blood cells, white blood cells, and platelets), we collect only plasma, and the rest is returned to you as you donate.

Saline is provided at the last cycle if necessary. The number of cycles needed depends on the volume of plasma you are donating.



## Refreshments

Enjoy some free refreshments and relax as you will be asked to wait about 5–15 minutes at the centre after your donation.

## Leaving the centre

Before leaving the centre, please book your next appointment. Your donation matters and it helps save lives. By creating a routine to donate regularly, you can continue your commitment to supporting patients in your community and across Canada.

# Personalize your journey

Remember - It's not just an appointment; it's a commitment to saving lives!

Create your own personalized donation plan, so you are in control of your schedule. We encourage you to make plasma donation a monthly commitment. Here are a few questions that might help you create your unique donation routine. It may be helpful to discuss this with a staff member while you are at the donor centre.



## Ask yourself these questions...

- How often will I donate? What is my favorite time and day of the week to donate?
- Will I be able to donate on short notice if there is an immediate need?
- What does my vacation plan look like this year and how will I plan my donation routine around that?
- What will I do during my donation to pass the time?
- Who will I bring to donate with me?
- How will I manage my appointments and reschedule if I can't make it?
- What is the best time for me to donate physically - early morning, after a big lunch, in the evening when I've had a chance to hydrate all day?
- How does donation fit into my work schedule? Does it depend on the week? Can I leave early on Fridays? Is there any day where I could take a longer lunch? Could my employer allow a bit more time at lunch to encourage donation? Could this be an activity promoted to all employees through Partners for Life?
- What day do I do my grocery shopping? Can I donate first?
- Donation can be a break from caregiving. Who can I ask to care for my children while I donate?
- Can I do a monthly lunch date with a friend, followed by a donation?
- Can I go on a regular date with my spouse, before or after donation?
- Can I book a regular time with my son or daughter to have some time together while donating plasma?





# Donor journey reviews

Here are some donor reviews. We encourage you to leave a review on Google and to complete our email survey.

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“

I started by donating whole blood when I turned seventeen. I then transitioned to plasma donation when the new plasma donor centre opened in Kelowna. Since the opening, I have donated plasma 22 times and counting. I am working to be the youngest donor with the most donations.

**David,** *plasma donor*



“

For my friends and I, donating plasma has become something that we enjoy doing together. It's an easy way for us to give back to the community and we can do it together with our friends and teammates. The amount of time it takes to donate plasma is minimal and the impact is so significant. The staff and volunteers are so friendly. They make sure that my experience is great and that I always feel comfortable. The new plasma donor center is awesome. It's a large, clean space, and the energy is always very positive.

**Keegan,** *plasma donor*



# Booking your next appointment

1. In person at the donor centre

2. Visit **blood.ca/plasma**

3. Call **1 888 2 DONATE**

4. On the **GiveBlood app**



**Together, we are Canada's Lifeline.**



@CanadasLifeline



**Canadian  
Blood  
Services**

BLOOD  
PLASMA  
STEM CELLS  
ORGANS  
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M4464 2024-11-28

**Plasma  
for Life**