Below are answers to questions you may have regarding the upcoming change to the frequency between blood donations.

Why is the donation frequency changing from eight to 12 weeks?
- Frequent blood donations can lead to a decrease in an individual's iron store. Your body needs iron to make hemoglobin, which carries oxygen. If blood has enough oxygen, your organs work effectively and your body has energy.
- Recently, we measured ferritin (a marker of iron store status) on a subsection of our donors and found that increasing the time between donations will better allow the body to maintain normal iron stores.

Can I come back every eight weeks if I eat iron-rich food?
- Along with results of other national studies, we found that eating iron-rich foods alone is typically not enough to correct the problem.

Does this change apply to platelet and plasma donors?
- No, the frequency change planned for whole blood donations does not apply because platelets and plasma do not contain red blood cells.

Is it unsafe to donate as frequently as I have been donating?
- National guidelines currently state that it is safe to donate every eight weeks. Mayo Clinic is decreasing the donation frequency as a precaution to ensure the health and well-being of our donors.
- If iron is not allowed to build up, your immunity is lower, increasing your likelihood of becoming ill.

Is the American Red Cross making this change? Why is Mayo Clinic?
- The AABB and FDA are concerned about iron depletion in blood donors and have asked blood donor centers to create a strategy to monitor, limit or prevent iron deficiency in blood donors.
- No, the American Red Cross is not instituting this donation frequency change at this time.
- Mayo Clinic may be the first in the United States to implement this change, but not the first in the world.

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS INFORMATION OR YOUR CONDITION,
PLEASE SPEAK WITH YOUR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER.
Phone: 507-266-8011  Email: donateblood@mayo.edu