



MAYO CLINIC BLOOD DONATION FREQUENCY CHANGES Q&A

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.**

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