



**American  
Red Cross**

# BloodBulletin

## First-time Donors

Every day, area hospitals are filled with cancer and surgery patients, premature babies, accident victims and other ill or injured people who need transfusions to live. Blood cannot be manufactured, it can only come from donors and because all blood and blood products are perishable, the supply must be constantly replenished.

When you donate blood, your single unit can be separated and transfused as components: red cells, platelets and plasma, so by donating one unit of blood, you may help save more than one life.



Born with a rare genetic condition known as thrombocytopenia-absent radius (TAR) syndrome, RYANNE BRIERE has had her share of health problems. As an infant RYANNE received 15 blood transfusions in four months and three more transfusions at a later date.

Knowing how important blood is to patients helps overcome the fear of needles that worries many people before donating. The actual process of donating blood only takes about 15 minutes and is almost painless. The entire process takes about 1 hour.

There are four steps each donor must go through when giving blood: registration, health history and mini-physical, blood donation and refreshments.

Donors must meet the minimum\* age requirement and provide signed parental consent, if required\* (there is no upper age limit), weigh at least 110\* pounds and be in general good health, have waited the minimum\* time between donations and must provide an acceptable form of identification.

*\* Some requirements vary by state, by donor age, or by donation type. Please call 1-800-RED CROSS or check with your Red Cross representative for specific information*

### Before Donating

- Get a good night's sleep.
- Have a good breakfast or lunch.
- Drink extra water and fluids to replace the volume you will donate (avoid tea, coffee, or other beverages with caffeine).
- Eat iron-rich foods: red meat, fish, poultry, beans, iron-fortified cereals, raisins or prunes.
- Avoid fatty foods such as hamburgers, fries or ice cream before donating.

### During the Donation

- Wear clothing with sleeves that can be raised above the elbow.
- Show the staff any "good veins" that have been used successfully in the past to draw blood.
- Relax.

### After the Donation

- Take the time to enjoy a snack and a drink in the refreshments area immediately after donating.
- If you feel light-headed, lie down, preferably with feet elevated, until the feeling passes.
- Rehydrate by drinking plenty of fluids over the next 24-48 hours.
- Avoid strenuous physical activity or heavy lifting for about five hours after donation.
- In rare cases when bleeding occurs after removing the bandage, apply pressure to the site and raise your arm for 3-5 minutes; if bleeding or bruising occurs under the skin, apply a cold pack to the area periodically during the first 24 hours.

Please call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or visit [redcrossblood.org](http://redcrossblood.org) for more information.