



## National Blood Donor Month

January is typically a period of critical blood shortages because people stop donating blood during the holidays.

Donating blood helps people who have an illness such as cancer, anemia, [sickle cell disease](#), or [hemophilia](#).

If you donate blood before you have surgery, your own blood will be stored for you in case you need a blood transfusion. If you don't need it, your blood may be donated to someone else.

When you donate whole blood, you give about 1 pint (473 mL). It takes about 10 minutes; however, the whole process, including answering questions and having a brief exam takes up to an hour.

To donate blood in California, you must:

- Be at least 17 years old. Sixteen-year-olds can donate with a signed parental consent form, which may be required each time you donate.
- Weigh at least 110 pounds.
- Be in generally good health and feeling well on the day of the donation, free of cold or flu symptoms, fever, or active infections.
- Have a current, valid photo ID such as a driver's license, passport, or student ID with your name and date of birth.
- Eat a healthy meal within a few hours before donating (avoiding fatty foods) and drink plenty of non-alcoholic fluids.

Donated blood is tested to ensure it is safe to use. It's also checked for its type. This ensures that the person who needs blood gets the right type.

If you would like to make a difference and want to donate, the following link provides locations on [where to donate blood](#).

Together, we can make a life-saving difference,

### Edward Kao, MD

Physician-in-Chief

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