

# Reasons to give

## Donating platelets



**American Red Cross**

1-800-GIVE-LIFE | [redcrossmichigan.org](http://redcrossmichigan.org)

### **What are platelets?**

- Platelets are the tiny particles in blood that aid clotting.
- Platelets are extremely fragile and must be transfused within five days of collection from a volunteer donor.
- Platelets are frequently prescribed to treat patients with cancer, leukemia and other serious diseases, babies in neonatal intensive care, and burn victims.

### **What is apheresis?**

- Apheresis is a special blood donation process for collecting platelets.
- Collecting platelets through apheresis has been possible since the 1960s, and continues to advance technologically.
- During apheresis, whole blood drawn from your arm goes into a blood cell separator instead of a blood bag. The separator removes platelets through a spinning process and returns the red cells and plasma through your other arm.

### **How long does it take to give platelets through apheresis?**

- Your visit to an apheresis donor center will take about two hours.
- The actual donation process takes about 60 to 100 minutes. During the procedure, you will relax in a contoured chair and can watch television or a movie.

### **How often can I give platelets?**

- You can donate platelets up to 24 times a year. We prefer that you wait two weeks between donations, although you can give seven days later if you chose.
- If you give platelets, you can donate whole blood or double red cells three days later.

### **Why do you collect more on certain days of the week?**

- Many hospitals schedule surgeries and transfusions on certain days of the week--most typically on Thursdays and Fridays.
- Since platelets have a shelf-life of only five days, we need donors to give platelets at the beginning of the week to meet late-week demand.

### **Do I need an appointment?**

- Yes. Donations are scheduled for your convenience through the American Red Cross.
- We have centers in Lansing and Flint.
- Early morning, evening and weekend appointments are available.



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**The need is constant. The gratification is instant. Give blood.™**