



CORONAVIRUS CHAIRPERSON FAQs

Why is it important to keep my scheduled blood drive on the calendar?

75% of blood donations in our region come from blood drives that are hosted by our partners in the community. As these groups take precautions in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, we are seeing a growing number of cancelled blood drives for the month of March. Additionally, we're seeing fewer organizations schedule drives for the following months. These cancellations pose significant threat to the blood supply.

What message should I be sharing with donors about the importance of donating now?

It's important for everyone to donate today so that we can build up a strong blood supply. Blood is a critical component of emergency preparedness because it's perishable and the supply must be constantly replenished. The blood that's on the shelf now is the blood that will save lives if there's an emergency. In fact, we believe we should double our blood supply to be prepared.

Can I catch Coronavirus by donating blood?

No. Donating blood is safe. We always use new, sterile needles that are discarded after use.

Can I donate blood while I'm sick?

No, as always, you are not eligible to donate if you're experiencing a cold, sore throat, respiratory infection or flu-like symptoms until three days after the symptoms have passed.

How can I keep my location safe if I'm inviting strangers inside for a blood drive?

We ask blood donors and our own staff to stay home if they are not feeling well. Our staff are trained in universal precautions to help prevent the risk of spreading infectious agents. We are also regularly cleaning public surfaces.

How does NYBC determine if people are eligible to donate blood?

We ask if you are feeling well and healthy on the day of donation. Our health questionnaire and laboratory screening are designed to identify donors who may be at risk for transfusion transmitted infections.

Can people donate blood if they have traveled recently?

We currently ask each donor about recent travel to regions where there is a higher risk for transfusion transmitted infections such as malaria and CJD. FDA has not established this same kind of requirement for the Corona virus since it is not known to be transmitted by blood. However, donors are encouraged to refrain from donating, or attending a blood drive, if they have traveled to areas with COVID-19 outbreaks, as defined by CDC. Individuals who are quarantined for potential coronavirus exposure should not donate blood for the protection of our staff.

What is NYBC doing in response to Coronavirus?

We are actively monitoring the situation along with our local partners and will follow the most up to date guidance from the CDC and City and State Departments of Health as the situation evolves. We take the health of our donors and staff very seriously and always follow strict guidelines to prevent the spread of infection.

Do you test blood before it goes to recipients?

All donated blood, even donations from repeat donors, is tested for blood type, hepatitis, HIV, syphilis, and other transfusion transmissible diseases.

Can you catch Coronavirus from a blood transfusion?

There is no evidence that coronaviruses are transmissible by blood transfusion. Furthermore, pre-donation screening procedures are designed to prevent donations from people who are experiencing symptoms of respiratory illnesses.

Will we run out of blood?

If future blood drives are cancelled, our community's blood supply will drop. We need to build up our reserves now so that we have enough blood available to withstand any temporary shortages and help those in need.

What can I do to protect myself from Coronavirus?

Standard practices for cold and flu season are the best way to keep our community healthy. This includes staying home when you're sick, frequently washing your hands, covering your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing with your elbow, and avoiding touching your eyes, nose or face after touching public surfaces. Visit this link for videos and reminders on proper hand hygiene: <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/index.html>