

Reasons to give

Preparing to donate



American Red Cross

1-800-GIVE-LIFE | redcrossmichigan.org

You are donating blood for a reason: to help save someone's life. Here are tips to help you prepare to make your donation as successful as possible.

On the day you donate . . .

- **Hydrate. Hydrate. Hydrate.** Drink extra water and other caffeine-free beverages 48 hours before you give blood to replace the volume of blood you will donate and to prevent low blood pressure.
- **Drink extra fluids** after your blood donation. Coffee and tea don't count since the caffeine can actually cause you to lose more fluid than you drink.
- **Eat foods like bread, cereal, fruit or lean meat.** Anything containing protein or complex carbohydrates. A small meal or snack before donating blood is recommended.
- **Avoid fatty foods before donating.** All donated blood is vigorously tested to ensure it's safe to transfuse to someone else. Lipids are the fatty materials that appear in your blood for several hours after eating things like hamburgers, french fries, ice cream or cheese. Lipids can make it difficult to properly test your blood, which means we may not be able to use your donation.
- **Avoid strenuous activities for a few hours after donating blood.** At school drives in particular, donors who will be involved in athletic activities should be scheduled to give blood at the start of the blood drive. They should drink extra fluids to replace the volume lost and should wait a few hours before using their donation arm in strenuous sports.

In between your donations . . .

- **Iron-up!** When you donate whole blood, you lose the iron contained in red blood cells. Eat plenty of iron-rich food to replace these cells between donations.
- **Foods rich in iron include** red meat, fish, poultry, broccoli and beans. Other sources of iron are fortified cereals and multi-vitamins.
- **Foods rich in Vitamin C** (like citrus fruits) help your body absorb the iron you eat.



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