

How you can improve your Donation Experience



Congratulations on choosing to save lives through blood donation.

It is important to us that you have a successful and positive donation experience. Blood donation is easy, relatively painless and healthful for you and the people who will receive your gift. By following a few simple measures you can make a big difference in preparing and enhancing your lifesaving donation experience.

BEFORE YOUR DONATION...

- **EAT** a good meal the night before, and a healthy breakfast and lunch on the day of donation.
- **DO** get a good night's sleep the day before donation.
- **DRINK** plenty of non-caffeinated beverages such as water, juice, or "sports" drinks (Gatorade, etc.). Avoid caffeinated beverages such as coffee, energy drinks and caffeinated sodas.
- **AVOID** wearing restrictive clothing such as tight sleeves; wear comfortable clothes.
- **READ** and get familiar with Applied Muscle Tension (AMT) Exercises; refer to end of this page.

AT YOUR DONATION LOCATION...

- **Remember to bring a Photo ID with proof of age. If you are 16 years of age, a permission slip is required (permission slips may be required for all students donating at High School Drives - check with your school's blood drive coordinator).**
- **Take advantage of our Hydration and Snack station prior to your donation.**
- **Relax! Let our skilled staff take you through the donation process.**

DURING DONATION...

- **Use Applied Muscle Tension (AMT) from the time you get onto the donation chair until the time you are released to refreshments.**
- **Don't sit up on your own. Wait until our staff ensures you are feeling well and you are released to refreshments.**

AFTER YOUR DONATION...

- **Please stay in the refreshment area for as long as you feel necessary but at least 15 minutes for your own safety.**
- **Drink plenty of non-caffeinated beverages over the next 24-48 hours and eat a healthy meal (salty foods are better in helping restore blood volume).**
- **Avoid strenuous activity such as heavy lifting, pushing, or pulling for 24 hours.**

HAVE A GREAT DAY! YOU EARNED IT. YOU SAVED A LIFE.

HYDRATION and SNACK STATION

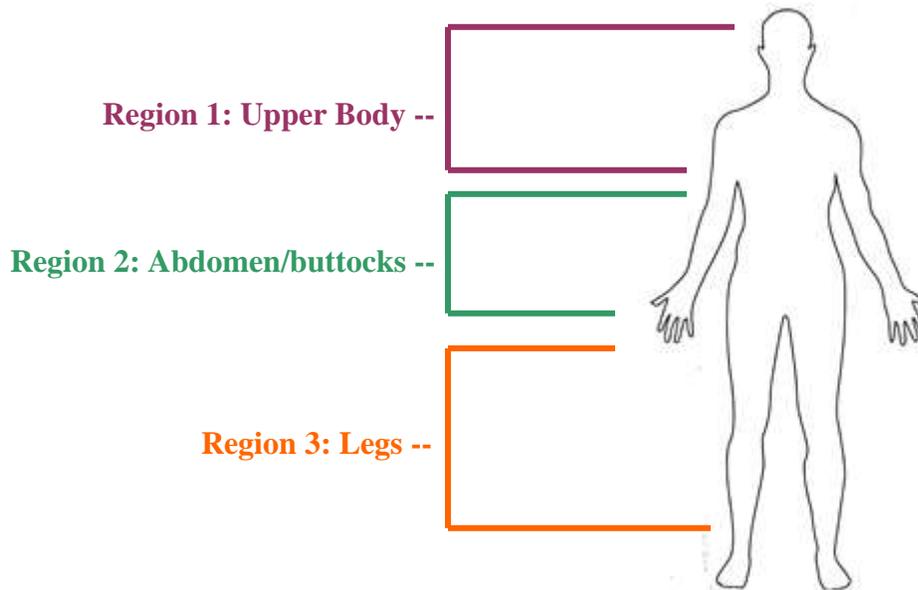
Salty snacks and water taken right before your blood donation will raise your blood volume and blood pressure. This will help prevent light-headedness sometimes associated with donation.



APPLIED MUSCLE TENSION (AMT) EXERCISES

These exercises are safe and easy to perform and are recommended for any blood donation. However, if you choose not to do them as a routine, be ready to use them should you feel faint, dizzy or nauseous before, during or after your donation.

Applied Muscle Tension is a simple technique consisting in cycles of repeated contraction and relaxation of major muscle groups of 3 regions of the body: arms, abdomen/buttocks and legs.



One group of muscles is activated at a time.

1. Tense the muscles in your arms (with the arm NOT used for donation, make a fist or lift your tense arm out in front of you as if lifting some weights). Count to 5 (5-10 seconds).
 - To reduce pain due to phlebotomy, relax the arm used for donation during the needle insertion.
2. *Release the tension; relax your entire body for about 20-30 seconds.*
3. Tense the muscles in your abdomen and/or buttocks. Count to 5.
4. *Release the tension; relax your entire body for about 20-30 seconds.*
5. Tense the muscles in your legs (scrunch your toes) or repeatedly cross and uncross your legs (legs extended). Count to 5.
6. *Release the tension; relax your entire body for about 20-30 seconds.*

▪REPEAT these steps at least 5 times or throughout your donation.

Scientific studies have shown that leg crossing combined with muscle tensing are effective at reducing or averting syncopal reactions by producing a rise in blood pressure and heart rate. These exercises are beneficial to *ALL* donors but especially to donors at higher risk for systemic reactions, such as young, low weight, female, or first-time donors, or donors with a history of easy fainting. Regardless who you are (sex, age, first time or repeat donor), AMT will facilitate your donation by giving YOU tools to control your symptoms and therefore improve your donation experience. TRY IT!