



**Parental Consent For Blood Donations**

Your child can make a lifesaving difference to people in our community by giving less than an hour of their time at Mercy's upcoming blood drive. The need for blood to meet the hospital's patient needs is growing. Your child's donation is a lifesaving gift for Mercy Hospital patients. The process is safe, easy, and rewarding.

Donors may give blood at the age of sixteen with the written consent of a parent or legal guardian. They must also meet other blood donation requirements before donating, which include a minimum weight of 115 pounds and general good health. Please be assured that every blood donor is thoroughly evaluated prior to donation to ensure that they meet these requirements.

There are three steps to the donation process:

- 1. **Medical Evaluation** - Ensures safety for both the blood donor and recipient. A series of self-administered questions will pre-qualify a potential donor. A short physical exam will record blood pressure, pulse, temperature, hemoglobin and iron levels. All donor information is kept strictly confidential. See reverse side for additional Predonation information on iron.
- 2. **Blood Draw** - Usually takes between five to ten minutes. Blood Donor Services staff will use only sterile, disposable equipment to draw one unit (approximately one pint) of blood. After the procedure is complete, the arm will be cleaned and bandaged.
- 3. **Refreshment and Relaxation** - Over the next 10-15 minutes, donors are encouraged to spend the time in the refreshment area. Snacks and drinks are provided to replenish fluid and energy levels.

Most donors feel fine throughout this process. However, occasionally a donor may experience weakness, dizziness, fainting or bruising. Please note: To help prepare for donation, your child should eat a meal and drink plenty of fluids at least two hours prior to donating.

If you have any question or concern about blood donation, please contact us at 314-251-4483.

**Please fill out completely. THIS FORM IS REQUIRED FOR BLOOD DONATION BY 16-YEAR OLD DONORS.**

**Donor Unit Number**

**Parent/Legal Guardian:** Please complete this section and sign **in ink**. The donor's legal name and last four digits of the Social Security number is required. Please do not use abbreviations or nicknames. A new consent is required for each donation until age 17. A picture ID with date of birth for donors (two other forms of ID with proof of age are also acceptable).

I understand that my child will be notified by mail of positive test results(s) and for follow-up testing if necessary. Additionally, if blood tests reveal evidence of reportable infectious disease, I understand that Mercy Hospital St. Louis Blood Donor Services may inform the appropriate government agencies and anyone else permitted by law. I also understand that there are certain risks associated with these procedures including, but not limited to, fainting, bruising, nerve injury, and anemia.

I have read and understood the information provided on this form about blood donation. I give my consent for \_\_\_\_\_ to donate blood.

**(Please Print)** First Name                      Middle Initial                      Last Name

Donor's Birth Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Parent/Legal Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Daytime Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Please Print

Parent/Legal Guardian Address: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Parent/Guardian:** \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Predonation Information on Iron Deficiency and Maintaining Iron Balance**

We care about your health and want you to know that donating blood reduces iron stores in your body. In many people, this has no effect on their health. However, in some people, particularly younger women and frequent donors of either gender, blood donation may remove most of the body's iron stores. We want you to understand these issues more clearly.

### **What happens to me during a blood donation?**

Red blood cells are red because of the way iron is carried in hemoglobin, a protein that brings oxygen to the body. Therefore, the removal of red blood cells during blood donation also removes iron from your body. The impact of this iron loss on your health varies among donors.

### **How does blood donation affect iron stored in my body?**

Iron is needed to make new red blood cells to replace those you lose from donation. To make new red blood cells, your body either uses iron already stored in your body or uses iron that is in the food you eat. Many women have only a small amount of iron stored in their body, which is not enough to replace the red blood cells lost from even a single donation. Men have more iron stored in their body. However, men who donate blood often (more than two times per year) may also have low iron stores.

### **Are certain groups at risk of losing iron to below normal levels from blood donation?**

All donors lose iron from blood donation. In some donors, these iron levels drop below what is considered normal (the normal range can vary by sex and age). Teenage donors may be at a higher risk for losing iron, to below normal levels, from blood donation. For this reason, donors age 16-18 will have their iron level tested as part of the donation process. After donation, donors with abnormal results will be notified of the result by certified mail and of any follow-up information.

### **How may low iron stores affect me?**

There are several possible symptoms associated with low iron stores. These include fatigue, decreased exercise capacity, and pica (a craving to chew things such as ice or chalk). In addition, having low iron stores may increase the possibility of having a low hemoglobin test, preventing blood donation.

### **What can I do to maintain my iron stores?**

While eating a well-balanced diet is important for all donors, simply eating iron-rich foods may not replace all the iron lost from blood donation. Taking multivitamins with iron or iron supplements either prescribed or over the counter (from a drugstore) may help replace iron lost. Iron supplements vary in name and proportion of iron within the tablet/caplet. The most effective dose, type of iron supplement, and length of treatment are currently being studied. Current recommendations range from one typical multivitamin with iron (19 mg iron) to elemental iron caplets (45 mg iron) for six weeks to three months. Your physician or pharmacist may be able to assist you in deciding what dose, type, and duration of iron supplement to choose.

### **Why doesn't a single big dose of iron replace what I lose during the donation?**

Because people have a limit in iron absorption (ie, 2-4 mg/day), taking iron in larger doses for a shorter period may not lead to better absorption (and may result in more side effects). The overall goal is to replace, over 1 to 3 months, 200-250 mg of iron lost during donation.