

# Donating blood

## If you are 16-17 years old

Parental consent to give blood is required for 16-17 year old donors who live in WA or QLD. This document contains frequently asked questions, information about giving blood, and the Parental Consent Form which should be completed and signed by a parent giving permission for you to give blood.

### Frequently asked questions from 16-17 year old donors

#### What does parental consent mean for me?

To give blood in Western Australia and Queensland, the State Government requires a parent to give written permission every time you donate.

In order to fulfil this requirement, your mother or father will need to sign the Australian Red Cross Blood Service Parental Consent Form. The form is on page 4 of this information document and is perforated for your convenience.

Your wellbeing, until you turn 18, is legally the responsibility of your parents. The form reflects your parent's permission for you to give blood and also indicates that they have sought a medical opinion that it's safe for you to donate.

This Parental Consent Form can only be signed by one of your parents and is a part of the regular pre-donation process for all 16 and 17 year old donors in your state. Please note this form is only valid for three months from the date of signing.

#### Can I just get my parents to write a note?

No, to meet the State Government's requirements, it has to be the Blood Service Parental Consent Form.

#### Where do I get the Parental Consent Form from?

The form is on page 4 of this document and is perforated for your convenience. Or, you can:

- **download** and print from [www.donateblood.com.au](http://www.donateblood.com.au)
- **call** 13 14 95 and ask to have one faxed or posted to you
- **email** [info@donateblood.com.au](mailto:info@donateblood.com.au) and ask us to email or post one to you.

#### What does a 'medical opinion' mean?

Getting a medical opinion means your parents and you have spoken to a doctor to make sure there is no medical reason why you should not give blood. You need to get a medical opinion before every donation.

#### Is it safe for me to give blood?

Yes, it is safe to donate blood if you are healthy and eligible. Even though your parent's signature indicates that they have sought medical opinion for you to give blood, you will still be assessed against strict safety criteria by the Blood Service prior to giving blood.

#### Does the doctor have to sign the form?

No, it is up to your parents to make sure that they have received a medical opinion before they sign the Parental Consent Form for you to give blood; the doctor does not need to sign the form.

#### Can I email the form?

No, for the Parental Consent Form to be valid it has to be printed, signed by a parent and brought with you in hard copy.

#### I'm in a boarding school, and want to donate during school term. What can I do?

Discuss this with your parents and where appropriate ask them to send or fax in a signed Parental Consent Form to you so you are able to bring it with you when you give blood.

#### What if I bring it later?

Sorry, you cannot give blood if you do not have a signed Parental Consent Form with you each time you come in.

#### What if I can't get a parent to sign the Parental Consent Form?

Sorry, under the legislation you cannot give blood if you do not have the signed Parental Consent Form.

#### Can anyone else sign the Parental Consent Form?

No, the Parental Consent Form must be signed by a parent.

#### But what if I don't have parents or my parents are not legally responsible for me?

Please contact us on 13 14 95 to discuss.

Please turn over

# Information about donating blood

## Blood donation is extremely safe

However, problems occasionally arise during or after a donation. These problems are not common but we are telling you about them so that if they ever occur, you will know some simple and appropriate steps to take.

Please note: All equipment used in blood collection is sterile, used once only and discarded.

### How to avoid bruising

Try to limit use of the arm from which the blood was taken for the first 15 minutes after donating. If you develop a bruise that causes discomfort, a mild pain reliever (not aspirin or other non-steroidal anti-inflammatories such as ibuprofen) or an icepack may help.

Please phone us if a troublesome bruise occurs. Such bruises are not common and we want to hear about them as we may be able to give helpful advice.

### Bleeding from the needle site

If this happens after a donation has been collected:

- lift your arm above your shoulder, keep your elbow straight and press on the bleeding site
- sit down and ask a staff member for assistance.

You can avoid bleeding by:

- limiting the use of the arm for about 15 minutes
- being careful when using your arm to eat or drink and when putting on a jacket after donating.

### Feeling faint

Fainting is usually due to a nerve reflex, which slows the pulse and lowers blood pressure for a short period.

If you feel dizzy, light headed, or unwell and are still on the donor couch, tell a staff member immediately.

- Rest for around 30 minutes or until you feel well again
- A drink of cold fluids is helpful.

If you feel faint after you have left the donor couch, sit or lie down as flat as possible rather than take the risk of falling.

If you have left the Blood Donor Centre then follow the recommendations above and if you're driving, slow down and stop the car where it is safe to do so.

If you feel faint within the few hours after the donation, this could be due to a delayed reaction. You are more prone to delayed fainting at this age due to lower body weight and haemoglobin compared to an adult. To avoid injury and relieve symptoms, make sure you lie down immediately, tell someone, and have a drink of cold fluids. If recovery is slow please seek medical assistance and contact us later to tell us what happened. We will then be aware of this next time you'd like to give blood.

### Reducing your chance of fainting

- Be prepared by having plenty of liquid in the 24 hours before donation especially in warm weather. Make sure you have something to eat in the 3 hours before donating and drink at least 3 good-sized glasses of water or juice prior to visiting the Blood Donor Centre.

- Avoid strenuous exercise and drink plenty of liquid in the few hours after your donation
- If you usually have low blood pressure and feel faint when you stand up suddenly, please tell us
- Tense and relax your calf and thigh muscles and move your legs and feet during the donation
- Are you very anxious? Please let us know. We can help you feel at ease.

### Rare events

Rarely a donation needle may irritate a nerve under the skin. This may be painful but is normally only momentary.

The needle may inadvertently enter an artery instead of a vein. This would be obvious to the staff member and will be appropriately managed at the time.

Any inflammation at or around the site (characterised by redness, tenderness, swelling and heat) should be regarded as potentially serious as it can be associated with infection and/or a blockage of the vein with a blood clot (thrombosis).

If any pain persists following the insertion of the needle or you have any concerns, please speak to a staff member. If you require medical attention after leaving the venue, please contact a doctor, and notify the Blood Service on 13 14 95.

Very rarely, donors may develop a fast pulse or a sensation of tightness in the chest. If this happens, tell a staff member immediately. If you notice a problem after leaving the Blood Donor Centre, contact a hospital or doctor so the problem can be assessed. Please contact us later and tell us what happened.

### Keeping your blood healthy – iron stores

Whole blood is rich in iron, some of which is lost each time you donate. This is why we recommend 12 weeks between whole blood donations to allow your body's iron stores to be replaced.

We measure your haemoglobin each time you donate, but this is not a perfect indicator of iron levels.

As iron can be low and the haemoglobin test still acceptable, it is important that you have a diet containing plenty of iron, even if your haemoglobin is satisfactory. Please ask for our brochure titled 'Why Iron And Haemoglobin Are Important'.

**After giving blood, please stay at least 15 minutes and have some refreshments.**

**Should you become aware of any reason why your blood should not be used for transfusion, please call us on 13 14 95.** In particular, if you develop a cough, cold, diarrhoea or other infection within a week after donating, please call us immediately.

## Frequently asked questions continued

### **Can my teacher/master/grandparent/coordinator/older sibling etc, sign the form?**

No, you cannot give blood if you do not have the Parental Consent Form signed by a parent – it cannot be any other adult or guardian.

### **Is giving blood worth all this effort?**

Yes! Every donation helps to save three lives. Australia needs over 27,000 blood donations each week – yet only 1 in 30 of us gives blood. So although getting the form signed every time may be complicated, we hope you'll continue to give for the many people who need your help every day.

### **What happens when I turn 18?**

Once you're 18, you do not need your parent to sign the Parental Consent Form anymore. You can continue to give as long as you are eligible.

### **Can I talk to someone at the Blood Service about this?**

Yes, you can phone us on 13 14 95 or send an email to [info@donateblood.com.au](mailto:info@donateblood.com.au)

### **Where can I get a copy of this form 'Donating Blood if you are 16-17 years old'?**

This information document which includes the Parental Consent Form can be downloaded from our website [www.donateblood.com.au](http://www.donateblood.com.au).

# Parental consent form

## WA/QLD at every donation

Thank you for providing your consent for your child to give blood. Every donation is essential in providing life-saving blood for the Australian community. The greatest need for blood typically comes from cancer and leukaemia patients, surgery and emergencies.

Australians need over 27,000 people to give blood each week yet only 1 in 30 Australians do so.

It is safe for your child to give blood if they are healthy and eligible. At the Blood Service our priority is the health and wellbeing of all people. Accordingly, we have in place guidelines designed to safeguard the health of both our donors and the recipient of their generous gifts.

Even though your signature indicates that you have sought a medical opinion for your child to donate, and considered pages 1–3 of this document, your child will still be assessed against strict safety criteria by the Blood Service prior to donating.

All donations of blood are tested for the presence of hepatitis B and C, HIV

1 and 2 (the AIDS virus), HTLV I and II and syphilis. If your child's blood proves positive for any of these conditions, or for any reason shows a significantly abnormal result, your child will be informed. Your child would be referred to a GP/specialist and encouraged to discuss the result with you.

**If your child is 16 or 17 years of age, you must complete this section before they can donate blood in Western Australia and Queensland. You must complete this section every time they donate blood. This form is then valid for 3 months from the date of signing.**

## Declaration

Please complete in black or blue pen only

I, (full name of parent) .....

have obtained the opinion of a medical practitioner that blood donation by

(donor surname/family name) ..... (donor given name) .....

will not be detrimental to his/her health. I give consent for

(donor surname/family name) ..... (donor given name) ..... to give blood.

Relationship to donor .....

Your address .....

..... State    Postcode

Home (   )       Business (   )

Mobile

Signature ..... Date   /   /

For further information call **13 14 95**  
or visit [donateblood.com.au](http://donateblood.com.au)

