

Privacy and your rights

Important information for people who donate blood



The purpose of collecting information

Australian Red Cross Blood Service collects personal information including health information from potential blood donors to protect both their health and safety and the safety and sufficiency of blood and blood products.

The Blood Service is bound by the Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth). The Blood Service respects and protects the privacy of its donors' personal information and complies with the National Privacy Principles.

Your privacy

Under the Privacy Act 1988 you have the following rights:

- you must be informed why personal information is being collected and whether it can be given to anyone else.
- you have the right to request access to the information held about you and if necessary to have it corrected so that it is accurate, complete and up-to-date.
- you have the right to have your personal information stored securely and protected from unauthorised access or misuse.
- you have the right to know how your personal information will be used.
- if you believe your privacy has been infringed you can make a complaint.

Collection and use of personal information

The Blood Service holds personal information supplied by you when you register as a blood donor. In addition, we hold test results for each donation.

The collection of this information is necessary to enable the Blood Service to provide services to the donor and others, such as doctors and hospitals whose patients receive blood.

The Blood Service only collects and uses this information for its normal and authorised purposes and operations, such as:

- accepting new donors and potential donors.
- updating the details of existing donors.
- recording test results of donors' blood.
- contacting donors about existing appointments to donate.

- requesting donors to make appointments to donate.
- responding to donor queries or requests for information or complaints.
- sending information or newsletters to donors.

In some instances, or where required by law, it may be necessary for the Blood Service to release personal information relating to your donation to insurers and/or regulatory auditors. The insurers and auditors are required to hold this information in confidence. Personal health information is also provided to State and Federal Government health departments and authorities where required pursuant to legislation.

When an individual browses the Blood Services website, donateblood.com.au, they do so anonymously. Personal information – such as name or email address – is not collected as they browse. The Blood Service does not use “cookies” to collect statistical information on website usage.

Access to your information

If you wish to see what personal information is held about you, you will be asked to submit a written request to the Privacy Officer of the Blood Service at the addresses on the back of this brochure. Proof of identity will be required to ensure information is only disclosed to the requesting donor. Some information may not be immediately available but we will attempt to deal with requests promptly.

Storage of your information

Personal information from donors is stored in an on-line system, the National Blood Management System. Access to this information is available only to authorised staff. Test results from blood donation are also stored on this system. Hard copy personal and health information is stored in locked filing cabinets and access restricted on a need to know basis.

Making a complaint

If you believe that your privacy has been infringed, please contact the Blood Service Privacy Officer in your State or Territory. The Blood Service will investigate any complaint and take such action as may be necessary to resolve it, having regard to any obligations under the National Privacy Principles. If you are not satisfied with our response, you may refer your complaint to the Federal Privacy Commissioner.

Australian Red Cross Blood Service

Write to the Privacy Officer at the following capital city centres:

Adelaide

301 Pirie Street
Adelaide SA 5000

Brisbane

44 Musk Ave
Kelvin Grove QLD 4059

Canberra

Corner Hindmarsh Drive & Palmer Street
Canberra ACT 2605

Casuarina

Corner Bradshaw Terrace & Scaturchio Street
Casuarina NT 0610

Hobart

40 Melville Street
Hobart TAS 7000

Southbank

Level 1, 98 Kavanagh Street
Southbank VIC 3006

Perth

290 Wellington Street
Perth WA 6000

Sydney

153 Clarence Street
Sydney NSW 2000

For further information call **13 14 95**
or visit donateblood.com.au

Frequently asked questions

1. What information is held about me?

The Blood Service holds donors personal information, including name, address, date of birth, telephone contact and availability to donate. We also have records of information provided via the pre-donation questionnaire and interview.

This may include medical history e.g. exposure to HIV or hepatitis, current or past medication, sexual activity history and drug usage/dependency.

A person cannot be accepted as a blood donor unless all the relevant information is collected. These records are essential to determine your ongoing eligibility to donate blood.

The Blood Service also holds results of tests undertaken on donated blood.

2. Where is my information held?

The geographic location of storage facilities may differ in each state/territory, however information is stored in the following ways:

- Current information in hard copy is held in secure filing systems in the state/territory in which you donated.
- Hard copies of information relating to previous donations are periodically archived and stored at secure off-site facilities.
- Electronically stored data are kept within high security, password protected systems with access limited to only those Blood Service personnel who need such access.

3. What security measures are in place?

The following measures are used to protect personal information:

- Security passes
- Locked doors
- Fire resistant, lockable cabinets
- Password protection on electronically stored information
- Restricted access to network information
- Storage at secure off-site facilities

4. Who at the Blood Service has access to my information?

Access to donor records is available only to authorised administrative and management staff, for the purposes of the operation of the Blood Service.

5. Does the Blood Service give the information to anyone outside the organisation?

All donor information is treated in accordance with the National Privacy Principles.

Our donor list is not sold or given to any organisations. When a donation is made, barcodes are used to track the blood from the donor to the recipient. As a result, with the exception of autologous and directed donations, all donations are issued without personal identifiers.

In general, the Blood Service does not provide any donor information external to the organisation without the consent of the donor, unless exceptional circumstances listed under the Privacy Act allow us to do so. However, both State and Federal legislation can require the provision of personal and health information in specified circumstances. The Blood Service is required to comply with such legislation.

6. Can a family member of a donor, such as a parent or partner, obtain information from your records?

No, unless that person has the written consent of the donor.

7. Does the Blood Service use external contractors for any functions or activities involving personal information and if so what measures are taken to protect this information?

In some instances, external mailing houses are engaged to produce and distribute donor letters.

Market research organisations are sometimes engaged to conduct donor research on behalf of the Blood Service. Agencies may also be used to recruit donors and to staff call centres.

When external services are employed, we ensure that any donor information disclosed is minimal and used strictly for the purpose for which it is intended. All such arrangements are subject to contractual confidentiality and privacy obligations. Any information disclosed remains the property of the Blood Service and is unable to be copied, retained or otherwise used by such agencies.

8. How is my privacy safeguarded in relation to blood samples collected?

Donors' interests and issues are considered by the Blood Service's independent Ethics Committee. Personal information is treated in accordance with the National Research Council's national statement on ethical conduct in research involving humans, as well as the National Privacy Principles.

9. Can I have personal information changed or removed from my records?

If your contact details change, please advise your local centre to ensure that we can keep in touch with you. Information provided by an individual donor during the interviewing process is used to determine the eligibility of the donor. Although health information initially provided may no longer be current e.g. sexual and drug related information, this information cannot be permanently erased. However, the donor can request additional or explanatory information to be added to his or her records.

