

Join the Fight Against Sickle Cell Disease

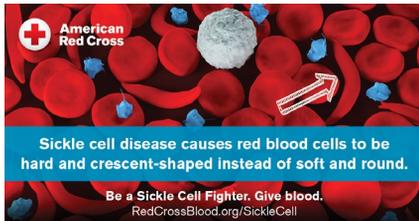
Why are blood donations so important for patients with sickle cell disease?



About Sickle Cell Disease (SCD)

Sickle cell disease is the most common blood disorder in the U.S. and impacts about 100,000 people, most of which are of African or Latino descent. The disease causes red blood cells to harden and form a C-shape (like a sickle). When hardened, the cells can get caught in blood vessels and cause serious complications for patients. These complications can include severe pain, respiratory conditions, organ failure, and even stroke.

There is no widely used cure for sickle cell disease. However, the Red Cross supports one of the most critical sickle cell treatments of all – [blood transfusions](#). For many patients, a close blood type match is essential and is found in donors of the same race or similar ethnicity.



How do I help people with SCD?

When you donate, blood is tested for specific antigens that are needed to treat sickle cell disease. If your blood contains those characteristics, we will let you know, so you can help sickle cell patients by donating whole blood, plasma, or platelets.

How do I make a donation?

Scheduling an appointment for a blood donation has never been easier! Our [Blood Donor app](#) (over 1 million downloads and counting!) and [online scheduler](#) make it quick to set up your appointment. Take a minute to download it now or call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767). The need for donations is constant.

How much time will it take to donate?

A [whole blood donation](#) takes about ten minutes, but donors typically budget an hour for the entire process. Many of our whole blood donors come in to donate every 56 days. But if you're able to spend a little more time, consider a [Power Red donation](#). Power Red is similar to a whole blood donation, except a special machine is used to allow you to safely donate two units of red blood cells during one donation while returning your plasma and platelets to you. And Power Red donors only come in every 112 days.

Schedule a blood donation today. Are you ready to help fight sickle cell disease?

- Your blood donation could be what patients with sickle cell disease need to treat their condition.
- One donation can potentially save up to three lives.
- Every 2 seconds someone in the U.S. needs blood and or platelets.
- The Red Cross has initiated additional safety measures during this challenging time. [Learn more here.](#)

Young Adult Volunteer Spotlight: Kyle Jones



Kyle Jones, a college Red Cross volunteer, recently began a lifesaving legacy as a blood donor.

Kyle Jones' experience with blood donations began before he was even born. Because he was premature, his mother relied on blood transfusions to safely deliver him into the world.

At first, Kyle was nervous about donating, but his worry quickly dissipated after he read up on the process and experienced the support of the kind blood drive staff and volunteers. What really resonated with him, however, was the impact of his lifesaving gift.

As the most compatible blood transfusion comes from donors of the same race or ethnicity, Kyle strongly encourages everyone, especially those of African American or Latinx descent, to [donate blood](#) and save lives.



"When I receive the blood donations that I need, I feel like I'm back to myself. I don't feel the pain. I don't feel drained. It's like putting gas in the car or batteries in your remote. I'm energized!"

Blaze Eppinger, describing how he feels after receiving a blood transfusion



"With COVID-19, this might be one of the times people like me need blood the most. If we can't get the blood we need, we may have further complications. If those who depend on blood transfusions catch coronavirus, it could be more severe if blood isn't available."

Jalen Matthews, on the impact of COVID-19 on sickle cell patients