

St. Paschal Baylon Blood Drive - Frequently Asked Questions

Why does SPB use *two* blood services?

LifeShare and the American Red Cross Blood Donation Services both have the same goal . . . to save lives by ensuring an adequate blood supply. Both are non-profit 501(c)(3) organizations that serve our local community in Cuyahoga County and surrounding areas. Both organizations are regulated by the FDA and have virtually the same rules and procedures.

St. Paschal Baylon used to rely on the American Red Cross exclusively, but we invited LifeShare to our parish in 2016 to meet our scheduling needs. Due to its very generous educational grant program which benefitted our school, we decided to continue service with LifeShare. However, many previous donors remained loyal to the American Red Cross, and there was an unfortunate drop in donor participation.

Today, we invite *both* organizations to our parish, and the American Red Cross has offered our school a grant fund incentive of its own. Please see the school grant question below for details about these programs.

How do blood donations save lives?

Science is still working on a way to produce synthetic blood. Until it does, people who need blood will continue to rely on blood donors! They are the lifeline for patients suffering from trauma, cancer, surgeries, severe burns, childbirth complications, and certain diseases like sickle cell anemia. The average red blood cell transfusion takes about 3 pints of blood, and over 44,000 donations are needed *every day* to keep up with the demand!

To make your precious gift go even further, each unit of whole blood can be divided into its separate components . . . red blood cells, platelets, and plasma. The patient's medical condition will determine which specific component(s) they need. For example, an accident victim or a person with sickle cell anemia needs red blood cells. Someone suffering from leukemia will need mostly platelets. Plasma is needed to treat patients with severe burns. With different patients having different blood component needs, it is possible to touch three people's lives with a single whole blood donation!

How does the Educational Grant Program work?

LifeShare devotes much of its promotional budget to its Educational Grant Program, which rewards successful school and church-sponsored blood drives with a monetary grant for their school. For every 25 donations (with double-red cell donations counting as *two*), SPB School receives a \$500 grant. Donations are cumulative during the program year (June - May), and re-set to zero on June 1. Funds from this grant program have been used to purchase much-needed equipment for our STEM and computer labs.

By special arrangement, the American Red Cross has also agreed to award grant funds for blood donations at designated drives held during times of critical need . . . such as around holidays or during the summer months. For such drives, the American Red Cross will award \$10 in grant money for each unit of blood collected.

What are “Hero Rewards”?

LifeShare offers special incentives for those who make multiple donations throughout the calendar year. “*Hero Rewards*” are earned in increments of 100 points every time you donate whole blood. You can earn extra points by making (and keeping) an appointment (+100 points), by donating three or more times in a year (+100 points each donation), by donating blood the following year (+200 points), and by making a double-red donation (300 points).

Hero rewards can be donated or exchanged for t-shirts, movie tickets, gift cards to restaurants or shopping venues. You can choose gift cards at Papa John’s Pizza, Cold Stone Ice Cream, Darden Restaurants (like the Olive Garden and LongHorn Steakhouse), Amazon.com, Kmart, and more. Just remember to redeem your points before they expire on December 29th!

What else is in it for me?

Before you donate blood, you’ll be given a little “mini-physical”. Your blood pressure, pulse, temperature, and hemoglobin level will be checked, and this information will be available to you online if you ever wish to consult your health history from prior donations.

After your donation, you’ll be given a snack and something to drink in the refreshments area before you go on way. And of course, you’ll have a deep sense of satisfaction knowing that you just helped save someone’s life!

The American Red Cross usually offers other perks as an extra incentive to donors, especially during times of critical blood shortages. Seasonal promotions will be announced ahead of our blood drives with the American Red Cross.

What are the eligibility requirements for donating blood?

Blood donors must be at least 16 years of age (with parental permission if under 18), weigh at least 110 lbs, and be in generally good health in order to donate blood. Whole blood donors must wait at least 8 weeks before they can donate again. Double-red cell donors have a 16-week waiting period between donations and have additional requirements (discussed below).

There are certain prescription medications and conditions that can cause a person to be either temporarily or permanently deferred. Pregnancy or recent pregnancy (within the past 6 weeks) will result in a temporary deferral. Other conditions such as recent surgery, tattoos, or foreign travel *may* temporarily disqualify a donor under certain conditions. Diabetes generally does not disqualify a donor if it is controlled, unless the person has received bovine insulin as described in the deferral list.

You can find out more about specific disqualifiers by consulting each organization directly about your concerns. LifeShare donors can refer to the Medication Deferral List available online at:

www.lifeshare.cc/Portals/0/REG008%20%28Medication%20Deferral%20List%29.pdf. For more specific eligibility questions, please contact Shawn Hassman, Donor Care Manager, at (440) 322-5700 ext. 2872, or email shassman@lifeshare.cc.

The American Red Cross offers its Donor Suitability line: 1-(866) 236-3276. Detailed eligibility info is also available on its website at: www.redcrossblood.org/donating-blood/eligibility-requirements/eligibility-criteria-topic.

Please . . . **do not** discontinue taking any prescribed medicines in order to donate blood!

What is a “double red blood cell” donation?

Also referred to as a “Power Red” donation or “2RBC” for short, a double-red donation extracts only the most frequently-needed component of whole blood (the red blood cells), and returns the rest to the donor. The process requires a special apheresis machine which is not available at all blood drives.

Double-red cell donations have many benefits, including:

- Twice the progress in reaching goals: A single double-red cell donation at a LifeShare drive counts as *two* units in qualifying for our school grant, and gives 300 *Hero Rewards* points!
- Lower risk & cost for the recipient: Whenever someone receives a transfusion, there's always some potential for a negative reaction. Patients receiving multiple units of blood benefit by being exposed to a fewer number of donors. Costs are also lower when two units of blood can be tested/processed only once.
- Efficiency & comfort for the donor: It takes about a half-hour longer to donate double-red cells rather than whole blood, but you'll save time by making one trip instead of two. A smaller needle is used, and you'll lose less volume because the plasma, platelets, and a hydrating boost of saline is returned to you as you donate.

Not everyone is eligible to be a double-red cell donor. Donors must be at least 18 years old and meet certain requirements in height, weight, iron level and blood type. Types O+ and O- are usually in the highest demand for this kind of donation, but other types may be collected too, depending on current blood inventories.

The height & weight requirements for double-red donations differ between men and women:

- Men must weigh a minimum of 130 lbs. and be at least 5'1" in height.
- Women must weigh a minimum of 150 lbs. and be at least 5'3" in height.
- Both men and women must have an iron level of hemoglobin level of at least 13.3.

What happens when I come to donate blood? (For first time donors)

The first time you donate, it will take a few minutes to complete the registration process. With LifeShare, this step can be initiated at home. Go to www.lifesharedonor.org to "get in the system" and save time upon arrival. Subsequent visits will follow a four-step process:

1. Check in with your donor ID card or driver's license. You'll then receive a confidential health history questionnaire, which can also be completed at home the morning of the drive. (See "*how to expedite my blood donation visit*" question to follow.)
2. You will be given a quick "mini-physical", during which your blood pressure, heart rate, temperature will be checked, as well as the hemoglobin level taken from a sample drop of blood. You'll also be asked to verify some confidential health history information.
3. You'll be seated in a comfortable chair or cot, and an area of your arm will be cleansed. The insertion will feel like a quick pinch. The blood collection itself will last about ten minutes, until approximately one pint of blood is collected.
4. After your donation, you'll be given refreshments and asked to stay for another 10-15 minutes to insure your wellbeing. Most people feel fine after giving blood, but once in a while a donor will feel light-headed if they try to get up too quickly after donating.

What should I do to prepare for my donation?

Prior to donating blood, you should drink plenty of non-caffeinated, nonalcoholic fluids and eat a healthy, low-fat meal for best results. If you are prone to having low hemoglobin results, you'll also want to increase your intake of iron-rich foods before your blood donation day.

Do not forget to bring your donor ID or driver's license, as well as a list of any medications that you take. If you've done any extensive traveling, you'll also need an account of everywhere you've visited outside of the U.S. over the past three years.

Donors under the age of 18 will also need a parental consent form. LifeShare's form can be found at: www.lifeshare.cc/Portals/0/Parental%20Consent%20Form%20%282016%29.pdf. For the American Red Cross, please go to: <https://p.widencdn.net/lvbx2h>.

Do I need an appointment?

Walk-in donors are welcome at any blood drive. However, online appointments are much preferred and greatly appreciated! Appointments are particularly important because, as the date of a blood drive approaches, the staffing level may be influenced by the number of scheduled number of donors. This can be problematic for a drive like ours, which draws most of its donors from walk-in traffic. Even if the staffing does *not* change, the scheduling process helps to even out the donor flow, minimizing the likelihood of long waits for everyone.

For LifeShare drives, one other benefit is that you'll earn an extra 100 points in Hero Rewards, just for making (and showing up for) an appointment . . . even if you are later deferred as a donor!

To make an appointment for a LifeShare blood drive, please visit www.lifesharedonor.org and use the sponsor code: *stpaschal* . For blood drives with the American Red Cross, make your appointment at: www.redcrossblood.org/make-donation.

Is there anything I can do to expedite my blood donation visit?

There are several things you can do to reduce your wait time when you come to donate:

- **Avoid the busiest times if it is convenient to do so.** As you might expect, the busiest times occur when our Masses let out . . . at 9:00am, 11:00am and 1:00pm. The first half-hour of the drive tends to be busy as well, especially with American Red Cross drives.
- **Find out if you're eligible first.** If you're unsure about your eligibility due to recent travel, medications, or other issues, you may be able to find out ahead of time if this will disqualify you as a donor and possibly avoid a long and frustrating wait. (Please refer "eligibility requirements" question above.)
- **Register and make an online appointment** a few days before the drive.
- **Complete the health history questionnaire online at home before you come.** Both organizations have services that allow you to do this, so take advantage of LifeShare's *DonorExpress* (www.lifeshare.cc/DonorExpress) or the American Red Cross's *RapidPass* (www.redcrossblood.org/rapidpass), and you'll breeze through the prescreening process. Both services require that you complete the questionnaire in a confidential setting **on the same day** as your donation.

Why does the American Red Cross blood drive have an earlier start time than LifeShare's?

Non-profit organizations have to be particularly judicious in how they spend their staffing resources, so both our blood drive hours and staffing level are determined by donor turnout. American Red Cross donors tend to be an early bunch . . . but when we started our first LifeShare blood drive at 8:00am, no one showed up until nearly 9:00! This is beginning to change, however, and our blood drive hours may be re-set to follow a trend.

Can I bring my kids?

Yes, please do! We will have child care available after 10am at the blood drive. Your kids are welcome to wait for you in the refreshment area where they'll be able to see you, but will have some activities to keep them occupied. In fact . . . we encourage you to bring your children along, so that they'll grow up without fear of the blood donation process and become future blood donors themselves!