



## **BLOOD DONATION AND COVID-19 FAQS Revised April 28, 2020**

### **Q. Is it safe to donate blood? What steps are you taking?**

**A:** The donation process itself poses no risk of infecting a donor with COVID-19. The virus is currently not known to infect patients through blood transfusion. Staff at all of our donor centers and community blood drives are taking the necessary safety measures laid out by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the American Association of Blood Banks. These measures include prescreening both staff and donors for COVID-19 symptoms, including taking donors' temperature, complying with social distancing with beds six feet apart and/or separated by a partition, wiping down surface areas and beds after each donation, and providing only packaged snacks and drinks.

### **Q. What steps are you taking to ensure the staff and donors are healthy?**

**A.** The health and safety of our staff and blood donors is top priority. Our dedicated staff is taking the necessary health precautions when it comes to social distancing, hand-washing, and sanitizing surfaces. In addition, staff members who serve our donors are required to have their temperature checked when beginning work, just as donors are.

### **Q. Are donor center and blood drive staff required to wear a face mask?**

**A.** We are currently following recommendations by the CDC about face masks as well as how to properly defend against COVID-19. Currently it is mandated for our staff to wear a mask at blood drives, even though they are dealing with a healthy population. Versiti staff members are following many new safety measures to ensure donor safety, as well as their own.

### **Q. Are blood donors required to wear a face mask?**

**A.** There is new governmental guidance that masks be worn in public areas where social distancing is difficult to practice. So beginning Monday, May 4<sup>th</sup>, all donors must wear masks at both fixed sites and mobile blood drives. We believe that most of our donors will provide their own masks, but we will provide disposable surgical masks to those who come without one.

### **Q. How long will it take to donate blood with the new safety precautions?**

**A.** With the extra requirements of social distancing and maintaining a schedule that is safe for our donors, we anticipate an extended stay for our donors of an additional 30 minutes. Normally, a donation would take about an hour.

### **Q. Does shelter in place affect blood drives?**

**A.** Individuals are allowed to leave their homes for **essential** healthcare and public health operations. Versiti is a critical part of the healthcare community. Organizations like ours who collect blood, platelets, plasma, and other necessary materials are exempt from Safer at Home directives. For this reason, donor centers remain open and community blood drives are being held, and future drives being scheduled.

### **Q. Do I need a note to attend a blood drive?**

**A.** You do not need a note to attend a blood drive. Donating blood is seen as an essential service and individuals are allowed to leave their residences to partake.

**Q. What if I have signs of a cold but am generally feeling well. Should I keep my appointment?**

**A:** Just like a normal appointment, if you feel ill, it is advised that you stay home and **reschedule your appointment for a later date**. Healthy individuals are encouraged to keep their appointments and will undergo the health screening process prior to their donation.

**Q. What if I discover I have COVID-19 after donating blood?**

**A.** Any donor who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 after donating is asked to get in touch with a Versiti call center representative where staff can connect them to the appropriate Versiti personnel to ensure the necessary steps are taken per CDC guidelines.

**Q. Can I catch the coronavirus at a blood drive?**

**A.** Blood donation is a safe process, with multiple safety measures in place per the CDC, and COVID-19 is not currently known to spread through the transmission of blood. Versiti is taking every measure possible to maintain a safe environment during the donation process, including pre-screening for donors and staff, social distancing, hand washing, and sanitizing beds.

**Q. How are you handling the social distance directive on mobile coaches/buses?**

**A.** To comply with social distancing, Versiti is limiting the number of staff members working on the mobile coaches, as well as the number of appointments that will be taken on the bus.

**Q. Are there other public links where I can learn more about COVID-19 and blood donation?**

**A.** For more information on COVID-19 as it relates to blood, visit the American Association of Blood Banks website [aabb.org](http://aabb.org). For general information on COVID-19, visit [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov).

**Q. When should a donor self-defer?**

**A.** Versiti has implemented 28 day self-deferral to anyone who has traveled to Italy and other European countries, China, South Korea, and Iran. If a donor believes they have been exposed, they should consider rescheduling their appointment.