

Be a hero on and off the field

CAN ATHLETES GIVE BLOOD SAFELY?

Nebraska Community Blood Bank welcomes and encourages athletes to donate blood and become advocates for blood donation. Athletes are among the healthiest individuals in our communities, so are ideally suited to help save lives through blood donation. With simple planning, you can help save lives and still accomplish your athletic goals.

WILL IT AFFECT MY PERFORMANCE?

It depends upon you and the sport. For extreme endurance sports, such as distance running or cross-country skiing, it may take a month or more to regain full aerobic capacity after donating blood. For many other sports you may only notice a difference for a week or two after you donate blood. We recommend you do not schedule a blood donation the same day as a vigorous practice or competition.

STAY HYDRATED

On the day of your donation, we suggest drinking more than the suggested 8 glasses per day of non-alcoholic fluids. After donating blood, your body will replace the lost fluids quickly if you are adequately hydrated. You'll know you are adequately hydrated if your urine is clear.

EAT HEALTHY AND REPLACE YOUR IRON STORES

Eat a full meal within four hours of your appointment. Make iron-rich foods part of your daily diet—iron is carried in the hemoglobin of red blood cells, and when you donate whole blood or red blood cells, iron is removed as well. Dietary iron can be found in meat, seafood, poultry, iron-fortified cereals, whole grains, beans, peas, and dark green vegetables.

Iron supplements

If you are male and donate blood 3 or more times per year, or female and donate 2 or more times per year, we recommend you take multivitamins with iron or iron

supplements that can be purchased over-the-counter at your local pharmacy. Current dosing recommendations vary—from a daily multivitamin with iron (19 mg iron) to elemental iron caplets (38-45 mg iron), for a period of 6 weeks to 3 months. Consult your physician or pharmacist to determine what dose, type, and duration of iron supplement to choose, and to determine whether taking supplements is right for you based on your body's needs and any other medications you may be taking.

TAKE IT EASY. NO, REALLY.

Some athletes choose to donate on a recovery day or during their off season. We recommend that all blood donors avoid strenuous activity such as lifting, pushing, or picking up heavy objects for 24 hours after blood donation. This helps prevent feeling faint or light-headed, and helps prevent the puncture site from re-bleeding. We therefore recommend you do not schedule a blood donation the same day as a vigorous practice or competition. If you must practice after your donation, take it easy and drink plenty of fluids.

PERSONAL BENEFITS

Prior to your donation, you will receive a health screening that includes checking your blood pressure, pulse, temperature, and hemoglobin levels. Donating blood generally takes an hour from arrival to departure—you can save lives and give back to your community with zero financial cost and just an hour out of your day!

HOW ELSE CAN I HELP?

Some athletes may consider donating platelets (or plasma if male) to avoid a drop in hemoglobin or a decrease in performance for a period of time after giving blood. When you donate platelets or plasma instead of whole blood, your red blood cells are returned to your body. Speak with a member of our team to learn more about donating platelets or plasma.



Brynn—mother, runner, hiker, and yogi—needed blood after a surgery. Today she is healthy and active, and encourages her fellow athletes to donate blood when they can.

[View the full story at NBCC.ORG](#)

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Community Blood Bank
A Division of Innovative Blood Resources



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