

# Blood donation myth busters

**MYTH:** “My weight does not matter when I want to donate blood.”

**FACT:** To be accepted for donation, the minimum donor weight requirement is 50kg (7 stone 12 pounds) while a maximum body mass index (BMI) of 40 is also taken into consideration.

**MYTH:** “I don’t need to tell the Blood Service of any previous vaccinations that I had because it doesn’t affect my donation.”

**FACT:** Live and non-live vaccines are used; a deferral period may be required depending on the type of vaccine received. It is also important to note that some vaccines could potentially cause a false positive result with some microbiological tests.

**MYTH:** “The Blood Service has access to my medical records; I don’t have to declare anything during my health screening.”

**FACT:** Staff at the Blood Service do not have direct access to a potential blood donor’s electronic medical records. They are reliant on the donor to provide their medical/social/travel history during screening prior to donation.

**MYTH:** “I cannot change between donating different types of components, e.g. I cannot change from donating whole blood to platelets.”

**FACT:** Donors can move between the type of donation they give, i.e. whole blood, or components (Apheresis platelets or Plasma for Medicine (PfM)), providing they meet the requirements.

Ensuring donor safety is paramount, e.g., safeguarding a donor from potential adverse effects like fainting. The risk of fainting becomes significant if the donation exceeds 15% of the estimated blood volume (EBV), meaning a minimum EBV of 3,500ml is required. For individuals with a BMI over 40, the formula used to estimate blood volume may lead to an overestimation of EBV, posing further risks.

[Want to know more... just click the link](#)

Vaccination can temporarily affect blood donation eligibility because some vaccines contain live attenuated viruses. Others might cause mild side effects like fever or fatigue, which could impact donor well-being. The waiting periods ensure the donor feels well and that there is no risk of transmitting any vaccine-related elements through donated blood. It’s all about safety - for both the donor and the recipient.

[Want to know more... just click the link](#)

The health screening prior to donation is a vital part of the donation process to ensure the safety of the donor and the recipient. The donor should declare all information, even if it appears negligible to themselves, to help staff apply the appropriate donor selection guideline where necessary, to ensure continued safety.

[Want to know more... just click the link here and here](#)

A deferral period applies to a donor who switches between donating whole blood and components. This ensures donor safety by limiting the frequency of donation and thereby minimising the risk of iron deficiency. Donors who switch to components also need to meet certain requirements before they can donate any of those, e.g. have an adequate platelet count for Apheresis platelets.

[Want to know more... just click the link](#)

**MYTHS  
BUSTED**