

## Can I Donate My Blood or Organs if I've Had Cancer?

Many cancer survivors want to help other people by becoming blood or organ donors. It's possible for many people who've had cancer to donate, but it varies by cancer type and medical condition.

- [Can I be a blood donor if I've had cancer?](#)
- [Can I be an organ donor if I've had cancer?](#)

### Can I be a blood donor if I've had cancer?

If you've had cancer and want to donate blood, you'll need to check and make sure your blood will be accepted. There are some kinds of cancer and cancer treatments that mean a cancer survivor will not be allowed to donate.

If you've had [Kaposi sarcoma](#)<sup>1</sup> or a hematologic (blood) cancer like [leukemia](#)<sup>2</sup>, [lymphoma](#)<sup>3</sup>, or [multiple myeloma](#)<sup>4</sup>, you won't ever be able to donate blood or blood products.

For most other kinds of cancer, you might be able to donate blood if:

- You've finished treatment for your cancer
- It's been at least 12 months since your treatment ended
- You've had no signs of the cancer coming back in the past 12 months

Some low-risk cancers like cancer in-situ and non-melanoma skin cancers that have been removed don't require a 12-month waiting period. Pre-cancers don't usually disqualify a person as long as they've been treated.

The best way to find out if you are allowed to donate is to call your local blood donation center. Donation centers may have different rules or waiting periods.

Some cancer survivors who want to donate blood may worry that they might give cancer to the person who is given their blood. There have been **no** reports of cancer spreading to another person through a blood transfusion.

Here are some resources with more information on blood donation:

#### [American Red Cross](#)<sup>5</sup>

- Find the Red Cross chapter or Blood Services region that serves you. Check donation requirements and commonly asked questions.
- Toll-free number: 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767)

#### [America's Blood Centers \(ABC\)](#)<sup>6</sup>

- Has a listing of local ABC centers for donating blood. The website also offers general information about blood, blood donation, and blood use.
- Toll-free number: 1-888-US-BLOOD (1-888-872-5663)

#### [AABB \(formerly American Association of Blood Banks\)](#)<sup>7</sup>

- Sets standards for blood collection and transfusion facilities. The AABB website has a blood bank locator, and general information on blood, blood product donation, and transfusions.
- Telephone: 301-907-6977

## **Can I be an organ donor if I've had cancer?**

Some people think they can't donate their organs if they have or had cancer. But having had cancer doesn't always mean that a person can't be an organ donor. Any possible organ donor is checked for medical conditions, including cancer. Whether someone's organs can be used will depend on many things, such as:

- The type of cancer
- If the cancer has spread (metastasized)
- Other medical conditions or infections

- Age

Even if someone is not allowed to donate organs, they may still be able to donate other tissues such as skin or corneas.

If the organs from a deceased person might be acceptable, a health care professional or donation specialist will always speak with the person's family or next of kin first. If you haven't signed up as an organ donor, your next of kin must give permission before any tissues or organs can be donated. Talk to your family about what you want to happen to your organs.

Here are some resources with more information on organ and tissue donation:

- [UNOS \(United Network for Organ Sharing\)](#)<sup>8</sup>
- [Donate Life America](#)<sup>9</sup>
- [Gift of Life Donor Program](#)<sup>10</sup>
- [Human Resources & Services Administration \(HRSA\)](#)<sup>11</sup>
- [Eye Bank Association of America](#)<sup>12</sup>

## Hyperlinks

1. [www.cancer.org/cancer/types/kaposi-sarcoma.html](http://www.cancer.org/cancer/types/kaposi-sarcoma.html)
2. [www.cancer.org/cancer/types/leukemia.html](http://www.cancer.org/cancer/types/leukemia.html)
3. [www.cancer.org/cancer/types/lymphoma.html](http://www.cancer.org/cancer/types/lymphoma.html)
4. [www.cancer.org/cancer/types/multiple-myeloma.html](http://www.cancer.org/cancer/types/multiple-myeloma.html)
5. [www.redcross.org/](http://www.redcross.org/)
6. [americasblood.org/](http://americasblood.org/)
7. [www.aabb.org/](http://www.aabb.org/)
8. [unos.org/](http://unos.org/)
9. [donatelife.net/](http://donatelife.net/)

10. [www.donors1.org/](http://www.donors1.org/)
11. [www.organdonor.gov/](http://www.organdonor.gov/)
12. [restoresight.org/](http://restoresight.org/)

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