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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

More people now eligible to give blood or platelets with the Red Cross

Restrictions lifted for many who spent time in certain European countries

BUFFALO, Oct. 10, 2022 — The American Red Cross now invites those who spent time in the U.K., Ireland or France and have never tried to give blood due to concerns over variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (vCJD) – related to mad cow disease – to give blood and help save lives.

Recently, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration updated its blood donor eligibility guidance on vCJD, eliminating the deferral for those who spent time in the U.K., Ireland and France between 1980 and 2001. In alignment with FDA changes, the Red Cross began accepting donations Oct. 3 from individuals who have not tried giving blood before due to the prior donation criteria. In combination with prior eligibility updates in 2020 for those who spent time in other European countries, this new change effectively eliminates the deferral related to vCJD for all donors.

“For many years, the Red Cross has heard from people who have spent time in these countries – often members of the military and their families – hoping for the opportunity to donate blood or platelets,” said **Duane Burnley, Regional Donor Services Executive, American Red Cross of Western New York Red Cross**. “We now welcome all donors who may have spent time in Europe and avoided blood donation as a result to join us in our lifesaving mission to help patients in need.”

More blood donors – especially type O donors – are urged to donate now to prevent disruptions to essential medical care this fall. Book a time to give by using the Red Cross Blood Donor App, visiting [RedCrossBlood.org](https://www.redcrossblood.org) or by calling 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767). As a thank-you, all who come to give Oct. 16-31, 2022, will receive a \$10 e-Gift Card by email to a merchant of choice.

Changes in progress for those with a Red Cross donor record

Those who have tried to give with the Red Cross and have been previously deferred from donating will be contacted by the Red Cross once system records are updated. This deferral is more complex to remove than others as there are decades of donors in the Red Cross system who have been deferred under the previous FDA requirements. Individuals who have questions about their donor record can contact the Red Cross Donor and Client Support Center at 1-866-236-3276.

Upcoming blood donation opportunities Oct. 16-31:

Grand Island
10/17/2022: 1 p.m. - 6 p.m., Grand Island Knights of Columbus, Grand Island Knights of Columbus, 1841 Whitehaven Rd

How to donate blood

Simply download the American Red Cross Blood Donor App, visit [RedCrossBlood.org](https://www.redcrossblood.org), call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or enable the Blood Donor Skill on any Alexa Echo device to make an

appointment or for more information. All blood types are needed to ensure a reliable supply for patients. A blood donor card or driver's license or two other forms of identification are required at check-in. Individuals who are 17 years of age in most states (16 with parental consent where allowed by state law), weigh at least 110 pounds and are in generally good health may be eligible to donate blood. High school students and other donors 18 years of age and younger also have to meet certain height and weight requirements.

Blood and platelet donors can save time at their next donation by using RapidPass® to complete their pre-donation reading and health history questionnaire online, on the day of their donation, before arriving at the blood drive. To get started, follow the instructions at [RedCrossBlood.org/RapidPass](https://www.redcrossblood.org/RapidPass) or use the Blood Donor App.

About the American Red Cross:

The American Red Cross shelters, feeds and provides comfort to victims of disasters; supplies about 40% of the nation's blood; teaches skills that save lives; distributes international humanitarian aid; and supports veterans, military members and their families. The Red Cross is a nonprofit organization that depends on volunteers and the generosity of the American public to deliver its mission. For more information, please visit [redcross.org](https://www.redcross.org) or [CruzRojaAmericana.org](https://www.CruzRojaAmericana.org), or visit us on Twitter at [@RedCross](https://twitter.com/RedCross).

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