Be a hero on and off the field



Can athletes give blood safely?
New York Blood Center welcomes and encourages athletes to donate blood. Athletes are among the healthiest individuals in our communities, so they're ideally suited to be blood donors. 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. For many other sports, you may only notice a difference for a week or two. We do not recommend donating blood on the same day as a vigorous practice or competition.

Stay hydrated
On the day of your donation, we suggest drinking at least eight glasses of hydrating fluids. Your body will more quickly replace lost fluids after donating blood if you are well hydrated.

Eat healthy
Eat a full, nutritious meal within four hours of your appointment and consider making iron-rich foods part of your daily diet.

Iron supplements
Iron is an essential element for most living things. Iron helps the body make new red blood cells, which is especially important after donating blood. When you donate red blood cells, some of your iron stores are also removed.

Eating a well-balanced diet is important for all blood donors, although eating iron-rich foods is unlikely to replace all the iron lost during a blood donation. Taking a daily multivitamin with iron or iron supplements is the best way to maintain a healthy iron level. Consult your physician or pharmacist to determine which supplement is right for you.

Take it easy. No, really.
We recommend that all blood donors avoid strenuous activity such as lifting, pushing, or picking up heavy objects for the rest of the day after donating. Some athletes choose to donate on a recovery day or in their off season. 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 takes about 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 to avoid a drop in hemoglobin or a temporary decrease in performance. When you donate platelets 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.

New York Blood Center

800.933.2566 • nybc.org

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