

# BLOOD DONATION MYTHS & FACTS



South Texas  
Blood & Tissue Center

[www.southtexasblood.org](http://www.southtexasblood.org)

It's about *life*.

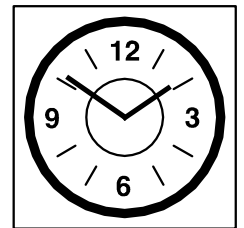
## DO YOU KNOW THE TRUTH?

◆ **MYTH: You don't need me. You have plenty of donors.**

**FACT:** Patients need you! Only about 5% of the eligible population takes the time to donate blood. Blood can not be manufactured in the laboratory. The only source for this lifesaving resource is volunteer blood donors. Approximately 32,000 units are used each day in the U.S.

◆ **MYTH: I don't have time to donate blood.**

**FACT:** Donating blood only takes approximately an hour of your time. The majority of that time is spent filling out a medical questionnaire and checking vital signs. The actual donation process takes about 10 minutes.



◆ **MYTH: Blood lasts forever.**

**FACT:** Red blood cells have a shelf life of only 42 days under refrigeration. Platelets last only 5 days. Every day the South Texas Blood & Tissue Center must collect 500 units of blood.

◆ **MYTH: People with tattoos and piercings can not be blood donors.**

**FACT:** Donors who have recently received a tattoo may be accepted, provided the procedure was done at a licensed facility in Texas. Donors must provide the name of the licensed business and the city in Texas where the business is located.

◆ **MYTH: People on blood pressure medications can not donate blood.**

**FACT:** Any medication currently being used for treating high blood pressure is acceptable, provided that the donor has been on the medication for at least 30 days.

◆ **MYTH: All medications and antibiotics defer you from donating blood.**

**FACT:** Taking medications is NOT an automatic deferral. Most are perfectly acceptable. Since there are many different medications, the easiest thing to do is call the Center to ask. Anyone who is currently taking antibiotics for an infection will be deferred until 24 hours after the last dose. Donors unsure of the medication used will be deferred for a 28 day period.



◆ **MYTH: Diabetics can not donate blood.**

**FACT:** Type II diabetics (non-insulin dependent) are eligible to donate blood provided the diabetes is controlled by diet and/or oral antidiabetic drugs. Diabetics taking injectable insulin may donate blood if they are stabilized and have not changed their insulin dosage within 2 weeks of donating.