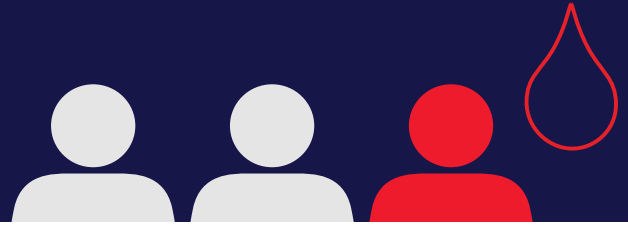


# WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

Information about the risks associated with blood donation and safety measures to mitigate them



## Please read before donating blood

### Health and safety when donating blood

Gender-based safety measures are applied during blood donation due to physiological differences between those who were assigned male versus female at birth. These measures are put in place to prevent risks that are potentially harmful to anyone donating blood products. That is why Héma-Québec registers the person's sex in the donor file.

### How does Héma-Québec register the person's sex in the donor file?

The person's sex is recorded in the donor file on the basis of photo identification presented at the time of the donation. Héma-Québec recognizes that the person's sex on the identification documents does not always correspond with the donor's gender identity. For this reason, work is underway to improve the registration process to make it fully inclusive for trans and non-binary donors while still ensuring their safety.

### What risks associated with blood donation are specific to trans and non-binary donors?

While the same safety measures apply to cis, trans and non-binary donors, it can be more complex to identify risks that apply specifically to donors who have undergone or are in the process of a medical transition (hormone therapy or gender-affirming surgery). Certain risks associated with sex assigned at birth may be either increased or attenuated, depending on each donor's specific situation.

For example:

- Hormone therapy can increase or reduce muscle mass, which in turn can affect a person's total blood volume, thereby potentially impacting (increasing or decreasing) the risk of an adverse reaction when donating blood.
- An absence of or decrease in menstruation can attenuate the risk of iron deficiency, a condition that can impact a person's health, in particular by aggravating or causing memory loss and mood disorders. In some cases, iron deficiency can also result in anemia, which is a temporary exclusion criterion for blood donation.



# Preventing risks associated with blood donation

The safety measures and advices set out below are intended to ensure a positive and safe experience for donors.

## SAFETY MEASURES

### Preventing iron deficiency associated with blood donation

Donors who were assigned female at birth are generally at greater risk of iron deficiency because of menstruation. For this reason, they have a longer waiting period between donations and a lower minimum hemoglobin level than do donors who were male at birth:

#### Time between blood donations:

- **84 days** (women)
- **56 days** (men)

#### Minimum hemoglobin level:

- **12.5 g/dl** (women)
- **13.0 g/dl** (men)

## ADVICES

- Eat foods rich in iron.
- Inform your doctor if you do three blood donations or more per year for those who were assigned male at birth or two donations or more for those who were assigned female at birth; your doctor is in the best position to offer advice based on your situation and to prescribe iron supplements, if needed.
- To learn more, visit the **Blood donation and iron reserve** page on our website.

### Preventing adverse reactions during or after blood donation

The volume collected during a donation is determined by the total blood volume, which is calculated using three parameters: weight, height and sex.

Donors who were assigned female at birth generally have a smaller total blood volume than those who were assigned male at birth.

This can have an impact on the risk of adverse reactions during or after the donation (e.g., nausea or feeling faint).

### 30 minutes before the donation

Drink 500 mL of water or juice and eat a salty snack.

### During the donation

Notify the staff immediately if you do not feel well.

### After the donation

Consult a health professional if you experience discomfort and the symptoms persist. In addition, please report your symptoms by calling **1-800-847-2525**.

## For more information

Visit the Héma-Québec website or contact Donor Services at 1-800-847-2525.

## To download this flyer

