



**Stem Cell Donors**  
Australia

**Manage stem  
cell donation  
alongside life  
commitments**

Unlike a blood donation or a doctor's appointment, there are a couple of pre-screening tasks you'll need to do before donation day.

It's best to be aware of these **before you are asked to donate** so you know what to expect and can easily manage donation alongside your life commitments.



## Pre-donation tasks for every donor

Every person who is asked to donate must be fit and healthy. This is to ensure that you and the patient are safe. When you are asked to donate, you'll need to complete the following pre-donation tasks:

- 1. Fill in a health questionnaire.** We need to understand your health background to ensure you can donate. Questions are usually filled out via a form. A Donor Support Coordinator can arrange a telephone call to capture your health history if you prefer.
- 2. Provide a blood sample.** You will need to attend your nearest Lifeblood donor centre to provide a blood sample. This is to confirm the match and check for infectious diseases.
- 3. Attend a Workup assessment and information session.** A Workup clinician will meet with you to run through your health history, explain the donation process, answer any questions you have and run a couple of tests, including an X-ray, ECG and vein assessment.
- 4. If donating by PBSC – preparing to donate.** You will inject G-CSF over four days before you donate.
- 5. If donating by bone marrow.** You'll need to fast (no food or drink) for a few hours before you donate.

## The time it takes to donate

It can take up to 16 hours, broken down over weeks or months, to help save someone's life. Many of the tasks we ask donors to complete before donating are short. The main task that may take a bit longer is the Workup assessment and information session appointment (usually half a day).

It's essential to be flexible and adapt to your situation if you start to experience side effects when preparing for or after donation day. Not all donors experience side effects, but it helps to be ready with alternative plans, just in case.

For a simple breakdown of the time you'll need to complete pre-donation tasks, the average time required for donation day and the average recovery time, view [the time it takes to donate infographic](#).

## Tips for managing donation alongside life commitments

There are ways you can fit blood stem cell donation alongside your life commitments. We understand our donors are exceptionally busy – from work and study to juggling kids, hobbies, travel plans and self-care, a lot is going on.

- Speak to your employer early on about your donation. We have some **resources** you can share with your employer, giving them information on what's involved. We can provide you with a Donation Authority letter to support your request.
- If you are studying, let your Donor Support Coordinator know. If there are specific dates you cannot do due to exams or coursework deadlines, have these handy.
- Fill in the health questionnaire during your commute, the next time you're a passenger in a vehicle or while watching Game of Thrones or Friends re-runs.
- Ask your Donor Support Coordinator to check your nearest Lifeblood centre to give your blood sample – Lifeblood has permanent and mobile donation centres, giving you more flexibility and choice. Speak to your Donor Support Coordinator if you live regionally and if there are alternative ways to provide a blood sample.
- Have a support person take you to your Workup appointment. Most appointments are between 8 am and 5 pm. Your Donor Support Coordinator will do everything they can to book your appointment at a time that works best for your schedule.
- Arrange adequate childcare for your Workup appointment and for donation day.
- If you are donating by PBSC, see if a support person can keep you company and support you for the days you're injecting G-CSF. Avoid strenuous activity and indulge in some more restful hobbies.
- If you're donating bone marrow, take it easy on the morning of your donation procedure. You will need a support person to take you to and from your donation.
- Take a few days to recover before returning to your usual activities. We understand that this may be difficult to do. If you return to your normal activities straight after the donation, do your best to take it easy.

## Making logistics work when living regionally

Donating your blood stem cells can be challenging if you live regionally. Most collection centres are within city centres, and completing some of your pre-donation tasks will require travel. We are incredibly grateful to our regional donors for going to great lengths to help give a patient hope and a second chance at life. Since living regionally comes with some challenges, here's a few ways to help reduce the impact:

- When you are asked to donate, your Donor Support Coordinator may be able to schedule relevant appointments in one go. This means you'll have advance notice so you can plan your travel.
- Depending on where you live, special provisions around providing your blood sample may be available. Speak to your Donor Support Coordinator to find out more.
- For all donors who may be too far from the collection centre when they donate, we arrange travel and accommodation for you and your support person. Reasonable expenses for this are covered.
- Travel and other similar expenses incurred by donors to complete pre-donation tasks or for the donation day can claim these expenses back, so you won't be out of pocket. We currently cannot provide financial assistance for loss of earnings.

## Additional resources



### VIDEO

What you need to know about donating blood stem cells



### ARTICLE

Learn more about how the patient and donor journeys interact

