

plasma components are replaced in the body quicker than red blood cells.

Platelets and Plasma will return to normal levels within a few hours of donating.

The red blood cells, the oxygen- carrying cells, can take two weeks or longer to fully return to normal.

## **VI. ONCE I START DONATING PLATELETS, CAN I STILL GIVE BLOOD?**

Yes, although we recommend you to choose just one type of donation to make regularly.

If you do wish to donate both blood and platelets, you need to wait 14 days after either type of donation before making the other.

You're welcome to try different donation programs to see which you like best: Whole blood, plasma or platelets.

Every donation is valuable and helps save lives. Whole Blood is just as important as platelets: we appreciate your generosity and commitment, whatever you're able to give.

**“Donate Blood, Save lives”**

**This message is provided by:**

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**HOW APHERESIS BLOOD DONATION  
WORKS**

## I. WHAT IS APHERESIS?

Apheresis (ay-fur-ee-sis) is an automated blood collection technology that allows a Blood donor to give specific blood components, such as platelets, plasma and red cells.

During the apheresis procedure, all but the needed blood components are returned to the donor.

Apheresis technology allows the Blood Bank staff to tailor the blood donor's donation to local demand.

## II. WHO CAN DONATE ON APHERESIS?

Anyone fulfilling the criteria bellow is eligible to donate his blood on Aphaeresis machine:

- Healthy
- Free from risk behavior exposing the individual to contract blood transmissible infections.
- Age: 18 to 60 years
- Body weight:  $\geq 50$  kg

The Blood donor will be tested for the following before donation:

- Haemoglobin:  $\geq 12.5$  g/dl et  $\leq 199$ /dl
- Haematocrit:  $\geq 38\%$  et  $\leq 50\%$
- Platelet Count:  $\geq 150,000/\mu\text{L}$

A medical questionnaire is filled and a medical consultation held.

## III. THE APHERESIS DONATION PROCESS

During your donation, blood is drawn and channeled through a sterile, single use tubing set into an automated system. Using a centrifuge built into the automated system, the most needed component is collected and then the remaining blood components are returned back to you.

It takes anywhere between 45 minutes and 2 hours to complete this process. You simply sit back and relax while helping to save a life.

All apheresis donations are solely done at Kigali Regional Center for Blood Transfusion fixed site because the machines can't be moved to mobile sites.

## IV. WHY PLATELETS?

Although different blood components can be drawn using Aphaeresis, Platelets are the most drawn. Platelets are the blood cells that form clots and control bleeding.

Many patients, such as burn victims, premature babies and organ transplant recipients, benefit from platelet donations.

Some individuals need frequent, regular platelet transfusions, such as cancer patients. Only 2% of one whole blood donation is made up of platelets (about three tablespoons).

It takes approximately six whole blood donations, compared to one platelet donation, to provide the effective dose of platelets needed for a patient's treatment.

Platelets have a very short shelf life and expire five days after collection, so a constant influx is needed.

It is also better for the patient because it reduces exposure to multiple donors.

## V. HOW OFTEN CAN I DONATE BLOOD?

Whole blood donors may give once every 56 days (eight weeks) in order to allow plenty of time to replenish their red blood cells.

Aphaeresis (platelet) donors can donate more frequently, as much as twice in one month up to 24 times per year, because the platelet and