



Directed Donation Information

Background

Children's National wants to provide the best medical care for your child. All blood collection centers in the United States are regulated by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). We will supply blood from community donors for any patient requiring a transfusion who does not have directed donor units available.

We agree with other blood transfusion experts that there is no evidence that blood from directed donors is safer than from regular volunteer blood donors. However, we recognize that this service is frequently requested by many parents and we offer such a program. **All blood donors must meet eligibility criteria and blood must be tested in accordance with FDA standards. No exceptions will be made.**

As a parent, you may qualify as a volunteer blood donor. We can mark your donation in a special way so that your blood does not go to your child.

Every blood donation helps our patients.

The major medical objection to directed donations is that with the loss of anonymity (unavoidable with such a donation) donors may be less truthful about medical history, especially if pressured to donate. We wish to provide parents/family the opportunity to contribute positively to the care of their child/family member. Parents/family members are under no obligation to supply directed blood for their child or family member.

Warnings

1. **Directed donations from potential future solid organ or blood/bone marrow transplant donors are prohibited.** There is a risk of future graft failure if the recipient forms antibodies against donor cells.
2. Donations from blood relatives must be irradiated prior to transfusion to prevent a complication called transfusion-associated graft-versus-host disease. This complication has a very high mortality.
3. Transfusion of maternal blood may expose her children to antibodies which can cause pulmonary injury and damage to red blood cells (hemolysis).
4. Directed donations must be ABO/Rh compatible with the intended patient. Incompatible blood cannot be transfused due to severe adverse events, and will therefore be made available for another patient.

How to participate

1. Your child's **attending physician** must complete a Request for Directed Blood Donation form. A parent or legal guardian must sign the Request. Patients 18 years of age or older may sign for themselves.
2. The Request form also includes an Authorization for Directed Donation. On this form, you can either authorize anyone who identifies themselves as a directed donor to donate for your child or identify a specific list of people that you approve for directed donation.
3. Once the Request and Authorization are completed, they should be hand-carried, mailed, or faxed to the Blood Donor Center at 202-476-6526 **before directed donations can begin.**

Important Information

- The directed units of blood collected will be held until the patient is discharged, or 14 days from the date of donation, whichever comes first. As with regular blood units, directed blood units have a slight risk of being lost, damaged, misidentified, or destroyed during shipping, storage, and processing.
- Every effort is made to assure that directed donations are available for the patient. However, we do not guarantee their availability. In extreme emergencies, the blood may need to be used for other patients.
- There is an additional charge, to cover administrative costs that will be added to your child's hospital bill for each unit of directed blood that is held for your child. Most insurance companies do not cover directed donations. Check with your insurance company to see if this is a covered service.

How to Schedule

- Directed donors require an appointment. At least a week in advance, they may call to schedule themselves by providing their name, phone number, and patient's name and date of surgery or transfusion. **Donations must occur earlier than 3 working days prior to the scheduled procedure.**
- The Edward J. Miller, Sr., Blood Donor Center is located in room 2700 on the second floor of the main hospital, by the cafeteria. We take our first donor at 7 am and our last donor at 3:30 pm during the week. We are open some Saturdays. Contact 202-476-KIDS (5437) for a full schedule.