

For Immediate Release



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Bloodworks Northwest Declares Code Red Emergency Blood Donor Shortage **Less than half of the donations needed to supply local hospitals**

Western Washington & Oregon Donors Needed to Book Appointments Immediately

(January 23, 2024, Seattle, WA) – Facing a severe blood shortage, [Bloodworks Northwest](https://www.bloodworksnw.org) is issuing a “Code Red” emergency, asking everyone eligible and feeling healthy to fill immediate appointments to give blood. Winter weather and a busy holiday season contributed to a low number of people booking appointments to donate. Only 28% of the donors needed to maintain a safe and reliable blood supply have booked appointments, leaving a gap of 23,000 donation appointments.

A Code Red is declared after four consecutive days of emergency levels. Type O Positive, Type O Negative, and Platelets have been fluctuating between critical and emergency levels since late December 2023. Donors in Western Washington and Oregon must respond to this emergency by booking and keeping appointments to donate every 56 days before the shortage impacts local hospitals.

Bloodworks Northwest President & CEO Curt Bailey says, "Code Red simply means we're running out of blood. The pressure on our local blood supply has been building for weeks. The recent cold snap kept donors away, which came right after the holidays when blood supplies typically falter. And, Bloodworks is providing local hospitals with more Type O than is being donated locally, which depletes the supply. Our community needs to act quickly to stabilize the blood supply and to ensure patients experiencing cancer can receive transfusions, surgeries aren't delayed, and our trauma centers can respond to emergencies." Bailey adds, "If you've been putting off donating blood, now is the time to make an appointment."

Same-day blood donation appointments are available at most locations, and appointments in the next three to six weeks are just as vital. Right now, universal [Type O blood](#) is extremely important, especially for trauma and emergency situations when the patient's blood type is unknown. January is *National Blood Donor Month*, and with this blood donor shortage that is

nothing short of a public health emergency, the importance of blood donation is keenly felt. Appointments can be made at www.bloodworksnw.org or by calling 800-398-7888.

Facts:

- Over 23,000 open appointments left to be filled through February.
- Over 5,500 need to be filled in the next 10 days.
- Showing up for the donation appointment is just as important as making it. People not showing up to appointments impacts the ability to collect enough blood. For assistance finding an appointment or to reschedule, call 800-398-7888.
- All regions of the U.S. are currently experiencing a shortage.
- Responding to emergencies requires blood that is already collected, tested, on the shelves, and ready for immediate use by first responders and medical staff.
- 39% of the population has O Positive blood, and only 9% of the population has O Negative blood. You do not need to know your blood type to become a blood donor. [Learn more.](#)

About Donating Blood:

- Most people in good health, at least 18 years old, and who weigh at least 110 pounds can donate whole blood every 56 days. See website for ages 16 & 17. Donors can donate blood ten days after COVID symptoms resolve, and COVID, RSV, and Flu vaccinations do not affect your ability to donate blood. Check out [our detailed eligibility Q&A](#) or call us at 800-398-7888.
- The FDA's previous donor eligibility criteria based on sexual orientation, which made it challenging for gay and bisexual men to donate blood, has been eliminated. [See update.](#)
- It takes about an hour to give blood from check-in to post-donation cookie. Information about [who can donate](#) and where, is available at www.bloodworksnw.org.

Bloodworks Donor Centers and Blood Drives:

Appointments and information at BloodworksNW.org or 800-398-7888. [See map](#) of Donor Centers and Blood Drives near you.

About Bloodworks Northwest – About Bloodworks Northwest

Donations to Bloodworks Northwest provide lifesaving blood supply to 95% of Pacific Northwest hospitals. Since 1944, Bloodworks has served the Pacific Northwest as a local, nonprofit, independent, volunteer-supported and community-based blood center and research institute. Bloodworks partners closely with local hospitals to deliver the highest level of patient care. Its comprehensive services include blood components, complex cross-matching, specialized lab services for organ transplants, care for patients with blood disorders and collection of cord blood stem cells for cancer treatment. Bloodworks

Research Institute performs leading-edge research in blood biology, transfusion medicine, blood storage and treatment of blood disorders. Patients with traumatic injuries, undergoing surgeries or organ transplantation, or receiving treatment for cancer and blood disorders all depend on its services, expertise, laboratories and research. Hear lifesaving stories by subscribing to the award-winning [Bloodworks 101 podcast](#). Blood donation appointments can be scheduled at [BloodworksNW.org](#).

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