

THE DONATION

1

- At your donation appointment, a health history and mini physical will be done.
- For a whole blood donation, about 1 pint of blood is collected, along with a few small test tubes.
- Your donation is kept on ice before being taken to a Red Cross center for processing; the test tubes go to the lab.

2

PROCESSING

- At our processing center, information about your donation is scanned into a database.
- Most whole blood donations are spun in centrifuges to separate it into: red cells, platelets, and plasma.
- Each component is packaged as a "unit," a standardized amount that doctors will use when transfusing a patient.

6

TRANSFUSION

- Blood transfusions are given to patients in a wide range of circumstances, including serious injuries, surgeries, child birth, anemia, blood disorders, cancer treatments, and many others.

3

TESTING

- A dozen tests are performed, to establish the blood type and test for infectious diseases.
- Test results are transferred electronically to the processing center within 24 hours.
- If a test result is positive, your donation will be discarded and you will be notified (our test results are confidential and are only shared with the donor, except as may be required by law)

5

DISTRIBUTION

- Blood is available to be shipped to hospitals 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Hospitals typically keep some blood units on their shelves, but may call for more for emergencies.

4

STORAGE

- Units suitable for transfusion are labeled and stored.
- Red cells are stored in refrigerators at 6°C for up to 42 days.
- Platelets are stored at room temperature in agitators for up to five days.
- Plasma and cryo are frozen and stored in freezers for up to one year.

