

# Healthy Living

## The many ways donated blood and plasma are used

There's no shortage of ways for people to give back to their communities. Volunteering, coaching kids' sports teams and participating in charitable fundraisers and food drives are just some of the many ways to strengthen a community. Donating blood is another way to give back and save lives.

The National Institutes of Health notes that blood and plasma donations are crucial for a wide range of reasons. In fact, recognition of the many ways blood and plasma donations are used might compel more people to make this simple and selfless act a bigger part of their efforts to give back to their communities.

- Blood donations are utilized during surgery. The American Red Cross notes donated blood is often used during surgery, including heart surgeries, organ transplants and operations performed after emergencies. Red cells carry oxygen throughout the body, and the Red Cross notes these are frequently given to trauma and surgery patients.

- Blood donations help cancer patients. The Red Cross notes that platelets are tiny cells in the blood that

help to form clots and stop bleeding. Certain types of cancer and cancer treatments prevent patients from forming their own platelets, making platelet donation vital for such individuals' survival. Platelet donation differs from more routine blood donation, and the Red Cross estimates the process typically takes roughly three hours from start to finish. However, some platelet donations yield enough platelets for two to three patients, making this well worth the investment of time.

- Blood donations help people with sickle cell disease. The Red Cross notes that patients with sickle cell disease may require multiple blood transfusions every year, and the blood used during such procedures needs to be very closely matched to the recipient's blood type to avoid complications. Sickle cell disproportionately affects people who are Black or African American, and the most compatible matches tend to be people of the same ethnicity, making blood donated by members of the Black community particularly useful and necessary to help individuals with sickle cell disease.

- Plasma donations are pivotal for burn victims. Burn victims typically lose considerable amounts of blood, and the plasma donation experts at Plasmasource.org note that severe burns

commonly cause fluid to leak from blood vessels into other tissues. When diminished fluid volume within blood vessels is not addressed, a host of negative outcomes, including

shock and potential organ failure, can occur. Such patients typically require plasma donations to replenish fluid volume and avoid further complications from severe burns.

Blood and plasma donation is a simple and selfless act that annually helps to save millions of lives. More information about the donation process can be found at [redcrossblood.org](http://redcrossblood.org)

## Notable men's health issues

The notion that men may not take care of themselves as well as women has some truth to it. Global health data highlights a persistent lifespan gender gap, with men dying an average of six years earlier than women, according to the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. That lower life expectancy is driven by a combination of biological vulnerabilities, risky behavior and a tendency to delay medical care. Men tend to be statistically half as likely as women to visit a doctor for regular checkups.

Illness can impact men's longevity, and certain health conditions are prevalent among men across the globe.

Cardiovascular disease

Heart disease is the leading cause of death among men worldwide. The World Health Organization says ischaemic heart disease accounts for approximately 13 percent of all global deaths regardless of gender. And the CDC says more than 50 percent of men age 18 and older have high blood pressure, a silent driver of heart attack and stroke.

Cancer  
Cancer can affect anyone, but men are especially vulnerable to certain types. The most common cancer for men is prostate cancer. Roughly one in eight men will receive a diagnosis in their lifetime, says Shortlister, a vendor database and platform. Lung cancer is the lead-

ing cause of cancer death for men, driven largely by smoking rates that are higher among men than women. Colorectal cancer is another form of the disease that affects a significant number of men.

Mental health  
Revive Research Institute says poor mental health is a silent crisis among men. Men are nearly four times more likely to die by suicide, stemming from societal stigmas that discourage men from seeking mental health support, advises Carthage Area Hospital.

Metabolic issues  
The American Heart Association says men are at a higher risk for type 2 diabetes at lower BMIs than women. If left unmanaged, type 2 diabetes can cause a series of issues that affect cardiovascular and kidney health.

Respiratory conditions  
Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is a major cause of disability in men that is linked to long-term tobacco use.

Also, occupational exposure to dust and chemicals can compromise lung health.

Road injuries  
Men account for a higher rate of unintentional injuries, according to Shortlister. Men represent the majority of workplace deaths, but they're also more likely to be involved in fatal motor vehicle accidents. The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety says crashes involving male drivers often are more severe than those involving female drivers. Men tend to engage in risky driving practices that put them at elevated risk for accidents.

Learning about the issues that affect men's health the most can encourage men to alter their lifestyles in ways that can improve their life expectancies.

## Welcome

### MICHAEL FIGART, DO

#### INTERNIST AND PULMONARY MEDICINE SPECIALIST

#### Committed to caring for Huntingdon

Whether it's a routine check-up or managing a long-term condition, Dr. Figart believes in listening to his patients and working together to create a plan that fits their unique needs. With a focus on accessible, high-quality healthcare, he's here to help you and your family stay healthy and thrive.

Dr. Figart, born and raised in Hollidaysburg and educated at Juniata College, is proud to serve the community he has always called home. He says: "My goal is to deliver the highest level of care while maintaining a personal connection that helps patients feel heard and understood."

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Your health deserves care you can count on, close to home. Call us at 814.234.6106 to schedule an appointment with Dr. Figart today.



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## LIFE SOUNDS BETTER WHEN YOU'RE CONNECTED

Good communication is about more than just hearing words. It's about:

- ✓ Feeling included in conversations
- ✓ Staying connected with family and friends
- ✓ Participating confidently at work or in social settings
- ✓ Supporting brain health and emotional well-being
- ✓ Avoiding frustration and misunderstandings

When hearing or speech becomes difficult, even small communication breakdowns can lead to isolation, stress, or withdrawal. **When communication improves, everything improves. Contact us to schedule your appointment today.**



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