

# About Automated Red Cell Donations

The New York Blood Center now has **"ALYX,"** an automated red blood cell donation system which allows you to donate two units of critically needed red cells in just one visit, saving two lives each time!

## How does Alyx help patients who need red blood cells?

An aging population and new medical treatments are contributing to an increasing demand for surgeries and procedures requiring blood transfusions. At the same time, more restrictive donor eligibility criteria intended to protect the safety of the blood supply has decreased the eligible donor pool. In the face of this growing need, obtaining two units of red cells from a donor will help us to meet the needs of local hospitals and the patients they serve.

## What's it like to make an automated red cell donation?

A red cell donation feels much the same as a whole blood donation but uses a smaller needle. A small amount of blood is drawn into a sterile bag and then spun in a centrifuge to separate your red cells from other blood components. The red cells are stored in a separate bag while your other components (plasma and platelets) are safely returned to you along with saline solution. This helps keep your body's blood volume balanced, so you actually feel better than if you donated whole blood. This cycle is repeated a few times until we have collected the required amount of red cells.

## Who needs your red cells?

Red cells are critically needed by:

- Surgery/Trauma Patients
- Cancer/Chemotherapy Patients
- Accident/Burn Victims
- At-Risk Infants

## Can't you take red cells from my whole blood donation?

Yes, but with automated red cell donation you can donate two units with each visit! Also whole blood donations need to be sent to the lab to separate the blood components, and then the red cells need to be filtered. With an automated donation, the red cells are separated and filtered immediately, making them readily available, after routine testing, for the patients who desperately need them.

## Is it safe to donate red cells?

At all times during the donation process your blood remains inside a sterile tubing system and is never in contact with the equipment used for your red cell donation. All tubing, bags and the needle used to collect your red cells are new, sterile and used only once for you. After use, the entire disposable kit is discarded. Also, the needle is smaller and more comfortable and because you are donating less volume than a whole blood donation you will actually feel better.

## Who can donate on ALYX?

To qualify as an ALYX donor, males need to be at least 5'1 and weigh at least 136 lbs. Females must be at least 5'5" and weigh at least 156 lbs. This is because men and women have different total blood volumes and because of this difference, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has established different donor requirements.

## How often can you donate?

You can donate red cells on our ALYX system every 112 days or 16 weeks.

Please sign up to be a Red Cell Donor.

- Call us at **1-800-933-2566** or
- Schedule your appointment online at [www.nybloodcenter.org](http://www.nybloodcenter.org)



 **New York Blood Center**