**Who can be a blood donor?** [1]

(1) Dear Alice,

What qualifications do you have to have in order to be a blood donor?

(2) Dear Alice,

I want to donate blood (O-!). I have donated for many years before I had seeds implanted for prostate cancer (wasn't metastasized then, or now), and am taking blood pressure pills. Now, is it all right for me to donate? Thank you.

**Answer**

Dear Readers,

Your commitment to donating blood to help others is respectable, and much appreciated by the medical professionals and recipients who need blood products. In general, blood donors must be healthy, over 17 years old, weigh over 110 pounds, and not have donated blood within the last eight weeks. However, there are many conditions which may affect a person’s ability to donate blood, so it is best to check with blood donation programs in your area regarding specific requirements. The [New York Blood Center](http://www.nybc.org) [2], [American Red Cross](http://www.redcross.org) [3], and [America’s Blood Centers](http://www.americasbloodcenters.org) [4] websites contain information on eligibility, medical conditions, what to expect when donating, and locations in your area. Blood donation requirements change from time to time, so it’s best to check with the organization collecting donations about their policies.

If you meet the requirements for blood donation, and you are interested but unfamiliar with the blood donation process, the following web pages will clue you in on what to expect during your appointment:

- [American Red Cross ? Donation Process](http://www.redcross.org) [5]

For Reader #2, the American Red Cross web site has an eligibility requirements for donating blood [7] section, including guidelines for medical conditions and medications. Check this out before a visit to a blood donation center. In case you are still unclear, discussing your interest in blood donation with your health care provider would be of benefit (The blood donation process also involves a medical screening by a health care professional, which includes an assessment of your general medical history, to see if you can donate blood that day).
Searching through these detailed documents may help you to determine your eligibility status.

Again, your regard for the well-being of others is commendable. Best to you as you give of yourself to others,

Alice!
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