

INFORMATION FOR FEMALE PLATELET DONORS

Thank you for your continued support of the Nicholas G. Xiarhos Blood Donor Center. Your generous donation helps support the community by providing lifesaving products to those in need. We take our commitment to the community and our responsibility to the safety of the blood supply seriously and so we would like to provide you with important information regarding eligibility criteria specific to female donors.

Per the AABB guidelines, we are required to perform certain testing to prequalify female donors who are not only interested in platelet donation but who have been pregnant since their last platelet donation. This testing helps Cape Cod Healthcare reduce and prevent Transfusion Related Acute Lung Injury (TRALI). TRALI is not common but it is a serious complication thought to be caused by a reaction to HLA antibodies present in the donor's plasma. These antibodies can occasionally leak into the recipient's lungs causing acute pulmonary edema (fluid accumulation in the lungs).

Female donors who have been pregnant are more likely to have the HLA antibodies in their plasma. These antibodies will be present for life and can be harmful if they are transfused to certain patients. Cape Cod Healthcare is committed to providing the highest quality of care to its patients and so we will test all female donors for the HLA antibody prior to donating platelets and after each pregnancy to be certain we are adhering to the highest standard of care.

Female donors can be tested at their blood donation appointment and will be notified of eligibility via mail. If you test positive, please continue to donate whole blood for your community.

What does HLA stand for? Human Leukocyte Antigen. HLA most often occurs in women who have been previously pregnant. Having been pregnant does not mean you will be positive for HLA so please test if you are interesting in becoming a platelet donor.

Is it harmful for me to be HLA positive or have this antibody? Having the HLA antibody poses no harm to you. The potential risk is only to the recipient.

Why is it so important to test for the HLA antibody? AABB has determined HLA testing is necessary to provide the safest product possible.

Will HLA testing require me to have additional bloodwork done? Yes, however, this testing can be done at the time of your blood donation so it will not require an additional blood draw.

When will I be notified of my results? Typically, we have the results of your HLA within days, but it may take several weeks for you to receive your results. Please do not worry if you don't get your letter right away.

I tested negative for HLA, do I ever need to be tested again? If you have been pregnant, you need to be retested.

I Tested positive for the HLA antibody but I had been donating for years without any complications so why can't I continue to donate platelets? Even though transfusion related complications are rare, the possibility is still present. In 2016 AABB determined prescreening female donors was necessary to mitigate HLA related transfusion reactions. Cape Cod Healthcare supports that decision and is committed to providing the safest possible blood products to our community.

I tested positive for HLA, can I ever donate again? While you cannot donate platelets or plasma, you can continue to donate whole blood.

For more information, please contact us at 508-862-5663

Thank you for your continued support!