



**American  
Red Cross**

## Why Is Blood Donor Diversity Important?



### One in 3 African American blood donors are a match for people with sickle cell disease. Are you the one?

For patients with sickle cell disease, blood donors who are Black are almost 3 times more likely to be a match for the blood most commonly needed, compared with donors who are not Black or African American.

While it does not typically matter the race of the donor and the recipient as long as their blood types are compatible. Unfortunately, frequent transfusions can make finding compatible blood types more difficult when patients develop an immune response against blood from donors that is not closely matched to the blood of the recipient.

### Now more than ever, the American Red Cross needs help from blood donors like you.

In the United States, it is estimated that over 100,000 people have sickle cell disease. **A single patient with sickle cell disease can require multiple blood transfusions each year to treat complications. Some may need as many as 100 units per year.**

Over 80% of the population has a positive blood type and can receive O positive blood. African Americans are the second largest population of individuals with group O blood. Type O blood is most often in critical supply as it is often needed by hospitals.

In fact, type O negative is the universal blood type and can be transfused to anyone who needs blood. Therefore, diverse populations play a critical role in meeting the constant need for blood.

### Act Today!



**Schedule an appointment** to give by visiting [RedCrossBlood.org](https://RedCrossBlood.org), using the Red Cross Blood Donor app, calling 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767), or by enabling the Blood Donor Skill on any Alexa Echo device.



**Bring a friend!** Many people say they've never donated blood because they've never been asked. Take the first step and invite a friend or family member to join you in giving the gift of life.



**Set up a virtual blood drive** on [RedCrossBlood.org/](https://RedCrossBlood.org/) **SleevesUp** and encourage others to donate.

### Just the Facts



Blood types are inherited, much like eye color. You may be familiar with the A, B, O and AB blood types. That's only the beginning. There are over 300 known antigens, and some antigens are unique to specific racial and ethnic groups.



Some antigens are more commonly found in donations from blood donors who are Black, including C-, E- and K- antigens. C-, E-, K- blood is the most requested blood type for a patient with sickle cell disease.



You don't need to know your blood type to give blood. The Red Cross tests and types all blood donations to ensure the most compatible match for patients.

**1-800-RED CROSS**  
**[RedCrossBlood.org/OurBlood](https://RedCrossBlood.org/OurBlood)**  
**#TeamUp4SickleCell**